

*Bath and North East Somerset Home to School Transport 2012/13*

*A Review Conducted by the Early Years, Children and Youth Policy  
Development and Scrutiny Panel*

*Background Briefing Document (Prepared October 2012)*

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## Introduction:

This background briefing paper has been prepared to highlight the background research undertaken by the Home to School Transport steering group in advance of their contributor session on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2012. The briefing paper outlines what work has previously been undertaken by Bath & North East Somerset Council, work by neighbouring local authorities and other local authorities who have completed recent Home to School Transport (HTST) reviews.

The reviews featured in this briefing document are a mixture of service led review and scrutiny investigations.

Two previous Scrutiny investigations at Bath & North East Somerset Council have looked at home to school transport provision; the Passenger Transport Review (2005) and the Transport to Secondary School Review (2008). The summaries included highlight what research has previously been undertaken and what work is still on-going within the Council and as such why these areas are outside the scope of this Scrutiny investigation.

On 21<sup>st</sup> May 2012, the Early Years, Children and Youth Panel agreed to appoint a steering group and agree the terms of reference for this review. The steering group for the review consists of Councillor Sally Davis (Chair), Councillor Ian Gilchrist, Councillor Liz Hardman, Councillor David Veale, Tess Daly (Co-opted Member representing the Roman Catholic Diocese) and Ian Gilchrist (Parent Governor at Fosseway School)<sup>1</sup>. The terms of reference outlined the following:

## Purpose:

- 1.1 The purpose of this review is to maintain transport services for young people whilst ensuring the most efficient deployment of public funds and meeting the full range of statutory duties in this field.

## Scope:

To achieve its objectives, the Panel will:

- 2.1 Investigate past and current work in this area within the council (2007-to date)
- 2.2 Investigate what other Local Authorities are doing in order to undertake some comparative analysis against our own HTST policies (operations/ methodologies) and identify any best practice methods to inform future recommendations for the review
- 2.3 Undertake a number of different consultation activities with key stakeholders to identify the impact of HTST policies (sub sets) on parental choice and costs
- 2.4 Undertake financial/cost analysis of the possible options identified through the reviews findings, ensuring that all affordable solutions are identified and reviewed.

## Out of Scope:

- 3.1 This review will only be looking at the Councils statutory responsibilities for providing HTST and will not be looking at other areas such as reducing bus fares.

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<sup>1</sup> Draft terms of reference for the review can be found here:  
<http://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=461&MId=3538&Ver=4>

3.2 Transport to private schools will not be examined during this review

## Objectives:

The objectives of this Policy Development & Scrutiny Review are to:

4.1 To consider the impact of current HTST policy and its various sub-sets in relation to parental choices and cost of delivery. Policy sub-sets are:

- HTST on grounds of distance (2 miles for children below the age of 8 and three miles for children over the age of 8)
- HTST on grounds of hazardous route
- HTST on grounds of denomination
- HTST on grounds of a child or young person being 'looked after'
- HTST on grounds of having a statement of SEN (Special Educational Needs)
  
- To consider the effectiveness and efficiency of current policies and their operation and undertake some comparative studies of the policies and cost of other Local Authority's.
  
- To consider the deployment of HTST funding within the overall context of Council spending on public transport services. Identifying the most affordable solution to maximise the use of existing resources.
  
- To make recommendations to the Cabinet, identifying the relevant Cabinet Member(s), with any changes to policies and operations in light of the findings of the Panel.

## Other Local Authorities Reviews:

Below are examples of recent revisions to HTST reviews from around England, these were conducted via service led reviews/consultations rather than scrutiny investigations and show the main areas of modification other local authorities have made.

### **Gloucestershire County Council:**

Gloucestershire undertook a service led review of their Home to School Transport Policies in 2010<sup>2</sup>. As a result of this the policies for Home to School Transport were revised as follows:

*Children aged 4-16 years – Policy from September 2011:*

- Removal of transport for catholic children to a catholic primary school/academy
- Change from providing transport to any catchment secondary school/academy to nearest catchment secondary school/academy

*Children aged 4-16 years – Policy from September 2012 onwards:*

- Removal of transport for catholic children to a catholic primary school/academy

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<sup>2</sup> Gloucestershire Home to School Transport Policy: <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/applyforabuspass>

- Change from providing transport to any catchment secondary school/academy to nearest catchment secondary school/academy
- Removal of transport for catholic children to a catholic secondary school/academy
- Removal of transport for children to a grammar school/academy

*Children aged 4-16 years with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities – Policy from September 2011 onwards:*

- Revision of wording explaining that transport will not be provided where a child does not attend the nearest appropriate school which could meet their needs due to parental preference

### **Cheshire West and Cheshire County Council:**

After a service led review <sup>3</sup>in 2011, Cheshire West and Cheshire County Council made the following changes to Home to School Transport:

- To withdraw subsidised denominational transport for pupils with effect from September 2012. However, transport provision to families on qualifying benefits will continue so long as the distance travelled is between two and 15 miles.
- A fund will be established to protect young people from families who do not meet the national needs for hardship support when the changes come into force over the next two years. The precise details of this will be developed as part of an engagement process.

### **Coventry City Council:**

In 2010/11, Coventry City Council undertook a service led review of SEN transport<sup>4</sup>. The service had identified that historically, there had been a history of overspend in this area and the review sought to change the way the council and its partners engage with parents about transport and to introduce personal transport budgets; allowing parents greater flexibility to transport their children and help children to gain more independence. Coventry City Council introduced three forms<sup>5</sup> of SEN travel assistance as a result of the review:

“Independent Travel Training (ITT): Available for secondary aged young people who have been assessed by the school and the SEN team as being ready and able to being learning to travel to and from school independently.

<sup>3</sup> Cheshire West and Cheshire County Council Review: [http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/education\\_and\\_learning/school\\_and\\_college\\_transport/school\\_transport\\_review.aspx](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/education_and_learning/school_and_college_transport/school_transport_review.aspx)

<sup>4</sup> Coventry City Council case study: <http://www.impower.co.uk/en/coventry-city-council-“-sen-transport-336.html>

<sup>5</sup> Home to school travel assistance service leaflets: [http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/download/1547/booklets\\_on\\_travel\\_assistance\\_for\\_children\\_with\\_special\\_educational\\_needs](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/download/1547/booklets_on_travel_assistance_for_children_with_special_educational_needs)

Personal Transport Budgets (PTB): This is a sum of money calculated for each family to cover the cost of travel to and from school. This budget can be spent in anyway your family sees fit to enable their child to get to school.

Standard council-provided transport: For families who do not qualify for ITT or PTB, standard council provision is still provided (although this option is not recommended unless absolutely necessary due to the long travel times and the lack of independence that this type of travel entails.)”

## **Neighbouring Local Authority’s Home to School Transport Policies:**

Bristol City Council and Wiltshire Council modified their HTST transport policies this year, South Gloucestershire have announced that there will be changes to their HTST policies from September 2013.

All of them had originally proposed to remove all subsidies for denominational transport; however, Wiltshire’s Cabinet modified this proposal to provide a one year subsidy to pupils who would be entering Year 11 in September 2012.

North Somerset continues to provide subsidised denominational transport.

### **North Somerset Council (from September 2011):**

In additional to the statutory requirements, North Somerset Council also provides the following home to school transport provisions<sup>6</sup>:

*Special Educational Needs:* According to North Somerset’s Home to School Transport Policy (September 2011) the local authority will provide free transport for pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs which specifically identifies that transport must be provided, having regard to their particular disabilities and normal statutory walking distances.

*Denominational Transport:* For pupils of secondary school age attending their nearest voluntary aided denominational school between 2-25 miles, the conditions for providing free school transport are that the parent/carer has clearly indicated that they are applying to the school on the basis of their faith and that the family is in receipt of free school meals or are in receipt of the highest level of Working Tax Credit. Transport for secondary school age pupils may also be provided to parents in receipt of free school meals/highest level of Working Tax Credits who, due to their philosophical beliefs, require a school with no religious affiliation and their nearest school would otherwise be a faith school. The potential for free school transport is only available to the nearest appropriate school and not to schools as a result of parental preference other than those outlined above.

### **Wiltshire Council (from September 2012):**

Wiltshire Council made changes to their denominational transport provision from September 2012

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<sup>6</sup> North Somerset Council’s HTST Policy: <http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/Transport/Travel/Home+to+school+transport/>

*Existing Applicants:* Only pupils/students who received denominational transport assistance during the 2011/12 academic year will continue to do so from September 2012. No new requests for transport assistance will be considered by the council, other than for those in receipt of Free School Meals or maximum Working Tax Credit. To ensure continuing assistance is provided for existing pupils the council will transfer an agreed amount of funding to each denominational school. The school will be responsible for making transport arrangements and charging parents where this is considered appropriate.

*New Applicants:* Applications for transport based on grounds of religion or belief, received on grounds of low income, will continue to be considered by the council, as required by the 2006 Education and Inspections Act. In addition to the council's policy of offering assistance for students attending Roman Catholic or Church of England aided schools, the law requires councils to consider applications for transport to schools of all faiths, religions and non-religions" (Wiltshire Council Home to School Travel Support Policy: Education Transport, March 2012).

Wiltshire's Children's Services Select Committee (Scrutiny Panel) held a 'rapid scrutiny exercise' to hear from parents, teachers, service officers and other members of the public prior to the Cabinet decision in September 2011. The Corporate Director for Neighbourhoods and Planning presented both the Cabinet and the Scrutiny Committee with a three options for possible funding for non-denominational transport<sup>7</sup>:

1: Withdraw all discretionary denominational transport assistance with effect from September 2012. Council Officers would seek to support the schools to range their own transport, to try and ensure that, as far as possible, transport continues to be available but funded by the users or from other sources rather than the Council.

2: Withdraw discretionary denominational assistance with effect from September 2012, but with transitional provisions to assist pupils entering the final year of their GCSE course in 2012...the Council would provide a fixed amount of funding direct to the schools, to assist them with the cost of providing transport for pupils who are part-way through their exam course when the new policy takes effect. The payment would be for one year only, and would be based on the number of pupils at the school already receiving transport...it is suggested that this would be set at £409 per pupil, which is the equivalent to the average overall cost per head of providing the existing transport in 2011/12, less the 2011/12 parental contribution. Transport would have to be arranged by the schools affected.

3: Withdraw discretionary denominational assistance with effect from September 2012, but with transitional provisions to assist all pupils who are already receiving transport...the Council would provide a fixed amount of funding direct to the schools, to assist them with the costs of providing transport for all pupils who are already attending the school, each year until they leave. The payment would be made once each year and would be for a fixed amount per pupil, for each child still attending the school who was receiving transport in the 2011/12 academic year. The overall amount paid by the Council would therefore decrease each year as successive year groups leave the school...it is suggested that the amount paid per pupil would be set at £409 per pupil...transport would have to be arranged by the schools affected.

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<sup>7</sup> Papers from Wiltshire Council Cabinet meeting 13<sup>th</sup> September 2011. Agenda Item 6 'Denominational Home-to-school transport:  
<http://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/documents/s22172/Denominational%20Home%20to%20School%20Transport.pdf>

The Scrutiny Select Committee recommended that the Cabinet adopt option 2 which was agreed on the 13<sup>th</sup> September 2011.

*Children with Special Educational Needs:* For children aged between 5-16 students have the same entitlement to free transport under legislation or policies agreed by Wiltshire Council as any other Wiltshire pupil i.e. they meet the statutory walking distances previously outlined or if they live within 'statutory walking distance' but because of their SEN they could not be reasonably expected to walk to school. These will be considered on a case by case basis and factors such as receipt of Higher Level Disability Living Allowance (DLA) can be used to assess the level of need. When considering cases relevant professional evidence will be required.

If parents/carers choose to send their child to a school other than the nearest appropriate school (or maintain a school place after moving to a new home where there is a new nearest appropriate school), they must take full responsibility for their child's travel arrangements. (Paraphrased from *Wiltshire Council Home to School Travel Support Policy: Education Transport, March 2012*)

### **Bristol City Council (from September 2012):**

Bristol City Council provides travel support (either by bus or rail pass, mileage reimbursement for parents/carers, cycling allowance, escorts for walking/public transport) for the following:

- Under 5's i.e. below statutory school age for full time pupils at the beginning and end of the school day.
- Pupils placed in temporary accommodation by Bristol City Council for a maximum of two terms
- Year 11 pupils who undergo an involuntary change of address who are undertaking recognised external examinations
- Support will be provided for children (pre 16) who live more than three miles away from their college and who are on a local authority funded college placement
- Other statutory requirements e.g. on the grounds of walking distances, hazardous routing, low income families,
- Home to school transport is also provided to pupils with a statement of SEN for Primary and Secondary age pupils.

Bristol City Council does not provide provision for the following:

*Denominational Transport:* In July 2011, the Cabinet removed the discretionary support for travel for all admissions to denominational schools with effect from September 2012. The decision did not affect the statutory entitlement of low income parents (those in receipt of Free School Meals or the highest level of Working Tax Credits) who expressed a preference based on religion or beliefs. The papers submitted to Cabinet before the decision<sup>8</sup> outlined that the estimated cost of providing denominational transport in Bristol for 2010/11 was in excess for £440,000 and that numbers using the service had been fairly consistent over the past three years. Last year 477 pupils were entitled to denominational transport, of those 41 received Free School Meals so were entitled to statutory home to school transport provision, although it was also noted take up

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<sup>8</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> July 2011 Bristol City Council Cabinet 'Review of Denominational Transport Policy Arrangements in Bristol'  
[https://www.bristol.gov.uk/committee/2011/ua/ua000/0721\\_9.pdf](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/committee/2011/ua/ua000/0721_9.pdf)



of Free School Meals was believed to be low and more should be done to encourage this entitlement.

In terms of financial savings, the average cost of providing denominational travel for the last three years for year 7 pupils has been approximately £56,000 per annum therefore the potential saving would be £56,000 less the cost of maintaining the minimum statutory entitlement. It was therefore estimated that with the phased withdrawal from September 2012, the first year saving would be £10,000 which would increase year on year.

### **South Gloucestershire Council (from September 2013):**

*Denominational Transport:* South Gloucestershire Council's Children and Young People Committee agreed in June 2012<sup>9</sup> to remove discretionary free transport to voluntary aided church schools with effect from September 2013 for children starting at primary school in Reception, entering Secondary School in Year 7 or entering Primary or Secondary school in a higher year group. The exception would be for low income families (defined on those qualifying for Free School Meals or being in receipt of the highest level of Working Tax Credits).

For those families currently receiving denominational transport, with effect from September 2013, there would be the introduction of a contributor charge of £120 per year (£360 per annum) for any continuing provision. The charge would be subject to annual review and remitted in the case of low income families.

### **Previous Research Undertaken by Bath & North East Somerset Council:**

Two previous Scrutiny reviews have been undertaken which considered elements of Home to School Transport. The first was a joint review that looked at all forms of Council commissioned passenger transport in 2005/06. The second was a review that looked at transport to secondary school in 2008/09 by the Children and Young People Panel.

### **Passenger Transport Review (2005):**<sup>10</sup>

This was a joint Scrutiny review undertaken between the Planning, Transport, Economy and Sustainability Panel, the Education, Youth, Leisure and Culture Panel and the Health and Social Services Panel.

The review looked at the way in which a range of passenger transport services options could have been prioritised and developed in the future including school transport, dial-a-ride, public bus transport, supported taxi services and, Council owned fleet of vehicles etc. The review undertook a range of communication and consultation options with the local community including:

- A seminar with invited local and national speakers

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<sup>9</sup> Minutes from June 2012 Children and Young People Committee:  
<http://council.southglos.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=420&MId=6102&Ver=4>

<sup>10</sup> Passenger Transport Review:  
<http://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=Passenger%20Transport%20Project%20%282004-2005%29&ID=437&RPID=5551908&sch=doc&cat=13202&path=13202>

- Market research study comprising of 300 on-street interviews with demographically selected interviewees
- Written submissions from members of the public
- Press releases
- Online feedback form
- Public contributor session

Although the review looked at a wide range of passenger transport options, the following points were highlighted about home to school transport:

The market research exercise found that bus usage was most prevalent in younger groups (under 25) and older groups (over 65). There was strong public support for the majority of home to school transport although there was also a lack of support for free transport for children who attend a denominational school outside their area. The public contributor session heard about the role that subsidised taxi services play in passenger transport in Bath which would include some home to school transport. The session also heard about issues with school bus services from representatives at Haysfield School and St Mark's School.

At the time of the review in 2005, school transport accounted for almost half of the Council's expenditure on all passenger transport services; annually £2.7m (out of £6.2m total), or which:

- £1.4m is spent on statutory school travel arrangements (as outlined at the start of this briefing document)
- £1.3m is incurred due to local discretionary policies set out by the Local Education Authority (LEA)

A crude analysis of the £1.4m spent on these services, supplied to 1192 pupils shows that the service at the time was costing:

- £1175 per pupil per year
- =£30 per pupil per week (assumes a 39 week school year)
- =£6 per pupil per day
- =£3 per journey

The Joint Panel also considered the cost of the Council's discretionary transport services which at the time were a £344k spend on denominational transport, £388k on providing transport to those affected by hazardous routings and £589k on transport for pupils with special educational needs. In the final report, the joint panel considered a range of options relating to home to school transport including whether discretionary services should be means tested; why some families receive free benefits based on their personal choice of a religious schools whilst others expressing their parental choice for a number of reasons e.g. single sex, mixed sex or simply exam results are not eligible; offering children living within the statutory walking distance space on spare capacity on existing school bus transport and whether this could produce a saving/reduce car usage; an evaluation of school bus contracts and consideration to extend the scheme to Post 16s living within the authority to travel to college. The Panel made four recommendations relating to home to school transport which were as follows:

“Recommendation 4.9.1 Remove or radically reform the current discretionary policy of free transport for pupils attending denominational schools.

In its place, we would like to see a school transport policy that provides free transport to those in most need (use means testing to assess eligibility) and introduces charging (using the new Charging Powers, on a cost recovery basis) for anybody else who wishes to use a bus to get to school.

The aim of a new policy should be to target current expenditure more equitably, taking account of all aspects of school choice and travel needs, to provide low cost transport to a much wider group of users than current policies allow. The overall objective should be to provide more bus services, increase ridership and reduce 'school run' congestion.

Recommendation 4.9.2 Set up a partnership between the Council, schools and bus operators for dialogue with a view to establishing more useful and cost effective bus routes to all schools (including independent) whose travel needs may not be currently met.

Recommendation 4.9.3 Use any financial savings created by adoption of other listed recommendations to invest in capital projects that will reduce the need for transport over designated hazardous routes, e.g. create safe routes to school, cycle routes, e.g. across Lansdown Road and also in rural areas where transport costs are high.

Recommendation 4.9.4 In reforming school bus services, take account of the great possibilities for tackling congestion:

- School transport must be provided so as not to force more cars on roads.
- Create more bus lanes to be used by greater number of vehicles, e.g. school buses, Social Services vehicles, community transport, etc.
- Implement staggered starting times for schools.
- The potential of travel plans to reduce unnecessary bus/care use and promote more safe cycling and walking routes.
- Investigate the principles that underpin the 'yellow bus concept' and look at how these have been developed by other Local Authorities." (Passenger Transport Services Final Report: 17, 2005)."

In July 2006, the final report based on the consultation undertaken by Children's Services on home to school transport was presented to the Cabinet for their final decision. The issue attracted a high level of public speakers and the Cabinet considered a range of possible charging options<sup>11</sup> and resolved to:

"(1) To note the valuable work of the Education, Youth, Culture & Leisure Overview & Scrutiny Panel (EYCL OSP);

(2) To note the work of the panel on additional routes but given the current overspend on Home to School Transport to decide that no further work to be undertaken at this time;

(3) To request that officers start to develop plans to establish a sustainable school transport strategy in response to the current "Education and Inspections Bill";

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<sup>11</sup> Minutes from 12<sup>th</sup> July 2006 B&NES Cabinet Meeting:

<http://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/CeListDocuments.aspx?MID=554&RD=Minutes&DF=12%2f07%2f2006&A=0&R=0>

(4) To confirm that charging should be introduced for denominational transport from September 2007, on the basis that the provision of transport to denominational schools is not considered necessary in terms of s.509(1) of the Education Act 1996;

(5) To set the level of charge on a six term year at £45 a term (approximately £1.50 a day). For families with more than one child the second and third child would pay 50% of the cost up to a maximum of 3 children. To be reviewed annually in line with other Local Authority charging policies; and

(6) To agree that the charges for denominational transport will not be applied retrospectively and that an exemption will be made for low income families in receipt of free school meals, income support or Working Tax Credit. Pupils who are in attendance at a denominational school and receive free transport before September 2007 will not be charged while they remain at that school.”

### **Transport to Secondary School Review (2008):<sup>12</sup>**

This review set out to investigate what school transport is currently being provided by non-statutory providers within Bath and North East Somerset and determine whether the transport system currently provided is meeting the needs of young people travelling to secondary school without our area. This review did not include non-statutory services for children with Special Educational Needs or denominational transport.

Several consultation exercises were undertaken by the Panel including two questionnaires; one for parents/carers and the other for children and young people, a public ‘contributor session’, identification of best practice and received briefings from service officers and transport providers. The main findings from the review were:

- *Cost of transport:* Over half of the parents that responded to the questionnaire said they felt that the cost of their child’s transport to school was too high. Furthermore parents also raised their concern of the high cost of paying for transport when they have more than one child using public transport.
- *Distance and journey time:* The distance and journey considered to be acceptable for children to travel was evaluated and discussed by the steering group and it was agreed that 1.5 miles = 30 minutes, is a reasonable distance to walk to school. The survey results also reflected this agreement as the majority of children were found to live between 1-6 miles from their school, and on average most children take between 15-30 minutes to get to and from school
- *Reliability:* The Bath Home to School Transport Campaign group and our survey results raised concerns regarding the reliability of local buses to get young people to school on time and safely. Traffic congestion was considered to be a common cause of unreliability of local buses. Some parents also choose to drop their child at the bus stop to make sure that they do not miss it, thus adding to traffic congestion. The steering group felt that the issue of reliability was related to capacity. Further investigation revealed that reliability of bus services in B&NES was no different to any other local bus operator. However on-

<sup>12</sup> Transport to Secondary School Review:

<http://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=Transport%20to%20Secondary%20School%20Review%20%282008-2009%29&ID=465&RPID=5551910&sch=doc&cat=13202&path=13202>

going issues were brought to the Council's attention, particularly students attending Ralph Allen School due to the withdrawal of a particular bus route (20A/C).

- **Safety:** there were a number of issues regarding the safety of children travelling to school, this included:
  - *Providing a seat and seat belt for every child.* The compulsory use of seatbelts on school buses was discussed by the steering group and it was agreed that the Council was unable to enforce the use of seatbelts on private bus companies
  - *The safety of children waiting for transport in the evenings after attending school clubs*
  - *The need of children to carry a bus card rather than change which makes them vulnerable to theft.*
- **The Environment:** The Bath Home to School Campaign group reported that *“without adequate and affordable public transport, many parents feel that it is safer, more reliable and cheaper to use their cars and end up unwillingly adding to the serious problems of congestion and pollution in this area and increasing the amount of carbon emissions.”* The review looked at, and supported, the work being undertaken by the Sustainable Modes of Transport team which encouraged the use of alternative means of travel such as cycling and walking. [NB: In September 2012, Cabinet approved the Local Sustainable Transport Fund West Bid scheme <sup>13</sup> which included provision to work with local secondary schools to promote cycling and other low carbon methods of getting from home to school].
- **Paulton:** The review raised specific issues with Secondary School transport for those young people living in Paulton. Transport to Somerdale School was highlighted as being costly and unreliable. During the course of the review, Somerbus agreed with Somerdale School to provide a school bus service from Easter 2008. A 'Privileged Fare Paying Passengers (PFP's)' scheme (when seats on buses can be purchased where there is excess capacity on transport and thus there is no additional cost to the Council) is also in existence for pupils travelling from Timsbury to either Norton Hill or Somerdale school.
- **Travel Plans:** It was felt that any school travel plans should be owned by the school and are reviewed on an annual basis, it was estimated that 80% of young people in B&NES are currently covered by a School Travel Plan.

When the Cabinet Member for Children's Services responded to the Panel's stated that as a result of the issues highlighted by the review a revised 20A/C bus route, with a new contractor, had been introduced which should improve transport links to Ralph Allen School. Further discussions were also due to take place between the Council and First Bus to investigate improving the 13C bus route which could take pupils from Bathampton and Batheaston to Ralph Allen School or investigate the potential to introduce a PFP scheme for this area to ease congestion problems on the 13C.

## Conclusion:

This briefing report was designed explore examples of what other local authorities HTST transport policies are. The background report focused on local authorities that have undertaken recent reviews of their HTST policies to see what changes have been made nationally and at

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<sup>13</sup> Cabinet Meeting 12<sup>th</sup> September 2012:

<http://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=122&MID=3250>

neighbouring local authorities so that the EYCY Panel can undertake a comparative analysis of our own HTST transport policies.

This background report has highlighted that nationally, Coventry City Council has introduced Independent Travel Training and Personalised Budgets for families with children with Special Education Needs and other local authorities have opted to modify their denominational transport policies.

The briefing report also outlines what work has previously been undertaken by Policy Development and Scrutiny Panels, focusing on the Passenger Transport Review (2005) which undertook a wider investigation of public transport in B&NES and the Transport to Secondary School Review (2008) which looked at non-Council transport to B&NES Secondary Schools.

## **Next Steps:**

This background report will be presented at the Home to School Transport contributor session on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October. The steering group have also undertaken a questionnaire with service users, Governors, Head Teachers and Transport providers.

The steering group will now be taking time to analyse the evidence gathered so far and potentially use these findings to undertake focus groups in November.

The steering group's final report, with recommendations to the Council's Cabinet, will be published in January 2013. The Cabinet will then have six weeks to respond to the report's recommendations by accepting, rejecting or deferring the recommendations.

If any changes are to be made to Bath & North East Somerset Council's Home to School Transport policies, these would be announced in Summer 2013 and come into force from September 2014.