

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Early Years, Children and Youth Policy Development and Scrutiny
MEETING DATE:	28 th January 2013
TITLE:	Home to School Transport Report
WARD:	ALL
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM	
List of attachments to this report: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Draft final report of the Home to School Transport Review2. Equalities Issues considered as part of the review3. Questionnaire analysis	

1 THE ISSUE

The basis for this review was a letter received by the Early Years, Children and Youth (EYCY) Panel at their public meeting on the 23rd January 2012. The letter was from the Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children and Youth at the time, Councillor Nathan Hartley, in which he asked the Panel to consider undertaking a review of Home to School Transport in order to attempt to make some financial reductions as part of the 2013/14 budget setting process.

After considering what research had already been undertaken, it was agreed that the Panel would undertake a review of the Council's current home to school transport policies and how the Council can maintain its commitment to maintain transport services for young people whilst ensuring the most efficient deployment of public funds and the full range of statutory Home to School Transport (HTST) policy duties in this field are being met.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Early Years, Children and Youth Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel is asked to:-

- 2.1 Review and discuss the Home to School Transport review report and recommendations and provide any additional comments and amendments ahead of the report being passed to Cabinet for their response

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Panel is being asked to advise Cabinet whether it considers that any or all of the Panel's recommendations fit within the objectives of the Council and consideration given as to whether they should be taken forward.

A request from the Panel to consider acting upon its recommendations does not imply any commitment by Cabinet to include objectives within a Service Delivery or other Plan. Any decision to adopt some or all of the Panel's proposals will be taken by Cabinet subsequently and will follow the appropriate democratic process including the financial implications.

4 THE REPORT

- 4.1 The research for the report was conducted in four phases.
- 4.2 Firstly a desk research exercise was completed in order to understand what work the Council has already undertaken in relation to school transport and what other local authorities have done to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their Home to School Transport policies.
- 4.3 Secondly the Panel undertook a questionnaire which was distributed to all existing service users as well as having letters and promotional materials sent to all schools, heads of governors, Town/Parish Councils and all transport companies operating within B&NES along with a press release to publicise the review.
- 4.4 A contributor session was held on the 22nd October to gather the views from people about the existing home to school transport system and to understand the concerns raised by them, particularly in the relation to denominational transport.
- 4.5 The Chair of the Panel has also met with pupils from a local primary school to find out more about how young people view the service.
- 4.6 The Panel identified that on the whole, service users were very happy with the existing home to school transport system, with many commenting that bus drivers were polite and friendly and that they were happy that their children arrived to school safely and on time. The consultation also revealed that of those who do not receive home to school transport assistant, very few of these appear to opt for cycling as an alternative particularly in rural areas as they were concerned about busy roads.
- 4.7 The steering group also identified that opinions on supporting denominational transport were divided in the questionnaire results between those who rated it as a clear priority and those who viewed it as a lower priority, however the contributor session also highlighted the importance of this service to parents/carers, students and teachers at local faith schools.
Based on these findings, the steering group have developed a series of options for the Cabinet to consider in relation to denominational transport, along with specific recommendations about improving cycling, encourage continued monitoring for transport routes and maintaining the HTST budget for looked after children

5 EQUALITIES

- 5.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment was carried out as part of this report. (see *appendix 2 of the report*)

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 *Ward Councillor; Parish Council; Town Council; Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel; Staff; Other B&NES Services; Service Users; Local Residents; Community*

Interest Groups; Youth Council; Stakeholders/Partners; Other Public Sector Bodies; Section 151 Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer

6.2 See page eight of report for a description of how consultation was carried out.

7 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

Social Inclusion; Sustainability; Young People;

8. ADVICE SOUGHT

8.1. The Council's Monitoring Officer (Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

Contact person	Lauren Rushen 01225 396410 Cllr Sally Davis (Chair of the EYCY Panel) Cllr Ian Gilchrist (Vice Chair of the EYCY Panel)
Background papers	Agenda and minutes from the contributor session held on the 22 nd October Background briefing and service officer briefing presented at the contributor session on the 22 nd October
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