

Call-in of decision E2546: Home to School Transport Review

The decision:

At the Cabinet Meeting of the 10th April 2013 the Cabinet agreed the recommendations of the Home to School Transport Review, including:

(3) To AGREE with effect from September 2014 a phased withdrawal of subsidised home to school transport services for new starters attending denominational schools from September 2014 who would not qualify under other home to school policy subsets, (e.g. as a low income family save in the case of children with siblings currently at the school) This option would not affect students who currently attend the school, only new pupils joining in September 2014. The anticipated savings from this withdrawal would be seen over a number of years can be found in the table in 3.2.5.

Reason for call-in:

We challenge point (3) of the Cabinet resolution relating to denominational transport, whilst supporting points 1,2,4 and 5 of the decision.

We are concerned that the Cabinet did not accept the recommendation of the Early Years, Children & Youth PD&S Panel, which proposed recommendation 3 (C), and instead agreed to recommendation 3 (d).

We believe that the Cabinet should investigate alternative options in order to continue to provide support for denomination transport, even if at a reduced level, and consider alternative funding sources. We are also concerned that the Council has not fully assessed the impact withdrawal of the denominational transport subsidy will have on the cost of statutory home to school transport support.

We believe the Cabinet should take greater note of the special nature of St Gregory's school, which was established to provide Catholic-based education for the Clifton Diocese as opposed to a school to serve the local community. We believe the process was flawed from its inception as it appears predicated on the local authority boundary, rather than the Diocesan boundary.

We are concerned about the impact withdrawal of denominational transport subsidy will have on the ability of Catholic parents to exercise their right to choose a Catholic education for their children. We are concerned that this will impact upon the number of Catholic children attending St Gregory's School and the other schools impacted. We are also concerned about the knock-on impact this could have on pupil numbers at other Bath schools.

We therefore believe the Cabinet should review this decision and consider alternative options to enable some level of support for denomination transport to continue.

Lead call-in Member:

Cllr Gabriel Batt

Supported by:

1. Cllr Sarah Bevan
2. Cllr Doug Deacon
3. Cllr Bryan Chalker
4. Cllr David Veale
5. Cllr Mathew Blankley
6. Cllr John Bull
7. Cllr Liz Hardman
8. Cllr Rob Appleyard
9. Cllr Eleanor Jackson
10. Cllr Geoff Ward