

## **Extract from the minutes of the Panel Meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2013**

The Panel agreed the following:

2.1 The Panel having reviewed and discussed the Home to School Transport review report and recommendations have asked officers to provide a cost neutral service investigation to the Cabinet for its March meeting.

2.2 Members of the Panel will take part in focus groups and report back any additional comments to the Cabinet.

2.3 Recommendation One

1) The Council should continue to seek to encourage more sustainable methods of home to school transport; the Panel would particularly like to see an increase in cycling. We understand that as part of the medium term service and resource plan for 2012/14, £500,000 has been allocated to improve cycling provision and we recommend that these, or future funds, are spent across B&NES and not just the city centre. We would particularly encourage the Cabinet to consider where routes could be used to create safer cycling routes to schools.

Recommendation Two

2) Given the questionnaire evidence, we recommended that the Cabinet encourage the promotion of safe cycling routes to school as an alternative to using the car where there is a safe route to do so.

Evidence from our questionnaire also suggested that there was some level of demand for two cycle paths and we recommend that the Cabinet investigate the feasibility of establishing the following two routes:

- a) Between Bishop Sutton and Chew Valley School
- b) Compton Dando to Marksbury

Recommendation Three

3) We recognise that the existing home to school transport system needs to become more efficient in the current financial climate and that 'doing nothing' is not an option. We therefore recommend that the Cabinet considers exploring and implementing from September 2014 option C (i.e. a combination of option A and option B) in order to reduce the overall spend on home to school transport, as follows:

A) Raising the level of financial contribution currently paid by parents/carers using home to school transport from the Council i.e. those who do not qualify for free home to school transport. This could take the form of raising the fare currently paid for the 1st child from £50 per term to a level that would ensure that the service operated on a cost neutral basis (this amount would need to be identified by the Cabinet and Service Officers );

B) Removing the 50% reduction for 2nd and 3rd children and/or removing the subsidised transport for families with more than three children requiring home to school transport (unless they qualified as a low income family).

#### Recommendation Four

4) That the budget to provide home to school transport for children in care (circa £70,000) is maintained for the foreseeable future.

#### Recommendation Five

5 a) Passenger Transport Services should review home to school transport routes on a termly basis to ensure best value for money and that home to school transport bus routes are as efficient and effective as possible.

5 b) This should also include liaising with parents/carers of students who have Special Educational Needs to consider whether it is appropriate for them to receive independent travel training and a personalised transport budget to arrange their own transport which may be more suitable for their needs, similar to the system used at Coventry City Council.