

**BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**21<sup>st</sup> July 2011**

**Report of: Strategic Director of Children, Young People and Skills**

**Title: REVIEW OF DENOMINATIONAL TRANSPORT POLICY  
ARRANGEMENTS IN BRISTOL**

**Ward: City Wide**

**Officer presenting report: Service Director: Education  
Strategy and Targeted Support**

**Contact telephone number: 0117 903 7950**

**RECOMMENDATION**

That approval is given for the removal of discretionary (non statutory) travel for all new admissions to denominational schools with effect from September 2012.

**Summary:**

There is a duty to provide support with travel to school for 'eligible' children. Some children attending denominational schools have had their travel arrangements supported by the local authority on a discretionary rather than statutory basis. This arrangement is subject to review.

**The significant issues in the report are:**

- The budget for the delivery of Home to School Travel arrangements within Bristol is in excess of £6.6m (paragraph 1, refers);
- There is a statutory duty to provide free transport for 'eligible' children (paragraph 5. refers);
- 1,071 pupils were supported with travel to denominational schools in 2009/10 (paragraph 12. refers);
- Over 88% of respondents to the consultation did not agree with the proposal to withdraw free denominational travel support (paragraph 24, refers).

**Policy**

## **Council Corporate Plan 2008 – 2011**

### **Our City: Making a Difference –**

**For children and young people** – The review of discretionary travel arrangements will enable resources to be refocused to ensure that the Council is able to deliver the best possible outcomes for Bristol's children, young people and families.

Sustainable School Travel Strategy and promotion of School Travel Plans.

### **Consultation**

#### **Internal:**

- Legal Services;

#### **External:**

- Denominational Schools
- Clifton Diocese
- Bristol Diocese
- Citywide stakeholders through public consultation

### **Context**

#### **Introduction**

1. The budget for the delivery of Home to School Travel arrangements within Bristol is in excess of £6.6m. The budget remains under pressure and overspends have been experienced. As a consequence of a recent route re-tendering exercise, costs are expected to increase and planned savings in 2011/12 will not be met. The most significant area of spend relates to transport for pupils with Special Education Needs.
2. In February 2009 a Home to School Travel Performance Clinic was undertaken. The Performance Clinics were established to identify opportunities for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of targeted services.
3. As part of the scope for the Performance Clinic a review was undertaken of the denominational schools' home to school travel arrangements. The review identified that the City Council provided travel arrangements beyond those that are the statutory minimum

requirement. In conclusion, the Performance Clinic made a number of recommendations which included the identification of opportunities to make the overall service equitable and subsequently generate financial savings.

## **Background information**

4. The Education Act 2006<sup>1</sup> places a duty on local authorities to

“...make such arrangements for the provision of transport and otherwise as they consider necessary [...] for the purpose of facilitating the attendance of persons receiving education”.

Such provision is defined in terms of both mandatory and discretionary provision.

5. For ‘eligible children’<sup>2</sup> free denominational home to school travel is a mandatory duty. Eligible children are defined as:

- Children with special education needs;
- Children with disability or mobility problems;
- Children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk because of the nature of the route;
- Children outside walking distance where no suitable alternative arrangements are made; and,
- Children entitled to free school meals etc.

6. Historically, Bristol City Council has used its discretionary powers<sup>3</sup> to provide free home to school travel to any child baptised into the Faith of their nearest appropriate Voluntary Aided Church school. The only prerequisite has been that the child must live more than the statutory walking distance from the school.

7. The Statutory walking distance is defined as being at least 2 miles for children aged under 8 and 3 miles for children aged 8 and over when measured by the shortest available walking route. Such free home to school travel is provided even though there may be other schools that are closer to where the child resides.

8. The Home to School Travel budget is under considerable pressure. Within the current economic climate there is a need to ensure that the service is managed within the allocated budget. Overspends in the budget divert resources from other potentially high priority areas to

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<sup>1</sup> Education Act 1996, s508B

<sup>2</sup> Education Act 1996, schedule 35B

<sup>3</sup> Education Act 1996, s508C

deliver elements of non-statutory provision. Simply increasing the budget allocation to the service is not possible without impacting on other essential service areas.

9. The principle of denominational travel is seen by some parents/carers to be discriminatory to non-religious families. This arises where parents/carers express a preference for their children to attend a particular school that is not their nearest appropriate school. In such cases there is no entitlement to support with travel. Conversely, parents/carers expressing a preference for a denominational school that is not their nearest available school, on the grounds of their religion or belief, would be supported with travel (provided the school is outside the statutory walking distance).

**Data on current and historic support with travel**

10. According to the October pupil census figures for 2010 there were total of 9,643 Bristol pupils on roll at denominational schools within the City (6,465 attending primary school and 3,178 attending secondary school).
11. Table 1 illustrates the number of Bristol children attending a denominational school in receipt of travel support (the data is based on financial year, rather than academic).
12. The number of pupils who are supported with travel and in receipt of free school meals has increased over the last 3 years, although not significantly and remains low. Those pupils in receipt of meals attending denominational schools for the period 2009/10 represent 3% of all those transported to denominational schools.

**Table 1: Pupils in receipt of support with travel attending denominational schools**

	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10
Number of pupils receiving denominational travel support (% of total pupils supported with travel)	1166 (36%)	1125 (36%)	1071 (35%)
Number of pupils receiving denominational travel support and Free School Meals	22	29	34
Total pupils in receipt of travel (all schools)	3201	3162	3096

13. Table 1 demonstrates that in 2009/10 there were 1,071 pupils who were supported with travel to denominational schools. Of these only 2 pupils were attending primary schools (this is because there are a

larger number of primary denominational schools within the statutory walking distance). The key focus of analysis is therefore on secondary school applications.

- 14.** It is estimated that the cost of providing denominational travel support in 2010/11 was in excess of £440,000. The number of pupils supported with denominational travel over the last three years has been fairly constant (approximately 40% of all those supported with travel). It is anticipated that this expenditure will be similar in 2011/12 and beyond.
- 15.** There were 477 first preference applications from Bristol families for secondary denominational schools for September 2011 admission. Of these, 41 are currently in receipt of Free School Meals. The pupils entitled to Free School Meals have to be supported through the statutory provision (where they live more than 2 but less than 15 miles from their nearest denominational school).
- 16.** Parents of children in low-income families can apply for free school meals and this measure is often used as a proxy for deprivation, and, as is the case with the statutory provision of travel, receipt of meals can impact on a family's entitlement for other support. In 2008, 10,500 Bristol Children were eligible for free school meals, nearly half the number of those who were deemed to be living in poverty. These figures would suggest that there are a significant number of potential claimants who have yet to apply for Free School Meals.
- 17.** Initiatives are currently being developed to address the unclaimed entitlement and bring those in actual receipt of meals closer to those entitled in principle. It is, therefore, possible that the number of pupils eligible for transport support may increase as more young people and parents are encouraged to register for Free School Meals.
- 18.** As part of the consultation exercise a potential risk was identified by one of the respondent denominational schools where, if the discretionary support were to be withdrawn, it was believed that many of those families applying for Bristol denominational schools might apply for schools outside the authority.
- 19.** Table 2 and Table 3 are an analysis of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> preferences, by local authority. Table 2 indicates that of the original 477 applications for denominational schools as a 1<sup>st</sup> preference, there were 267 2<sup>nd</sup> preferences. Of these, 219 were for schools in Bristol and 39 of these preferences were for other denominational schools.

**Table 2: 2<sup>nd</sup> Preference Applications from families applying for a denominational school as a 1<sup>st</sup> Preference**

<b>Number of 2nd preference applications</b>	<b>267</b>
Bath and North East Somerset	15
Bristol	219
North Somerset	14
South Glos.	19

20. Table 3 indicates that of the original 477 applications for denominational schools as a 1<sup>st</sup> preference, there were 148 3<sup>rd</sup> preferences. Of these, 115 were for schools in Bristol and 18 of these preferences were for other denominational schools.

**Table 3: 3<sup>rd</sup> Preference Applications from families applying for a denominational school as a 1<sup>st</sup> Preference**

<b>Number of 3rd preference applications</b>	<b>148</b>
Bath and North East Somerset	9
Bristol	115
North Somerset	12
South Glos.	12

21. Table 2 and 3 demonstrate that potentially it is likely that Bristol families may choose to attend Bristol schools. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> choices appear mainly to be made on a basis other than religion or belief. There will be an impact in terms of pressures on other Bristol schools but this may be balanced by local families securing places at denominational schools.

### **Consultation**

22. The Department for Education require local authorities to consult on any changes to their local policies on school travel arrangements, with all interested parties included in the consultation. Consultations should last for at least 28 working days during term time<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> DfES, Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance, 2007, part 6, pp 31

**23.** The consultation period for the review of denominational travel arrangements in Bristol began on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2010 until the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2010 (6 weeks). The questionnaire (see appendix A) was available on line (on the council's consultation finder) as well as in paper format. Key stakeholders who were written to and provided with links to the questionnaire are detailed in Appendix B.

**24.** All those taking the opportunity to complete the consultation were asked to express either their disagreement to the proposal to withdraw free travel support to denominational schools from September 2011 (option A) or their agreement to the proposal (option B).

### **Response to consultation**

**25.** There were 1,030 responses to the questionnaire. The majority of those who responded were either a parent of a child for whom a place had been applied for at a denominational school (20.4%) or who were already in attendance at a denominational school (63.5%).

**26.** Of those who responded 914 (88.7%) did not agree with the proposal to withdraw free denominational travel support and 111 (10.8%) supported the withdrawal of support. There were 5 (0.5%) replies from respondents who failed to select option A or B.

**27.** Of those who responded with a child due to start a denominational school in 2011, 94.9% did not agree with the proposal to withdraw free denominational travel support.

**28.** Of those who responded with a child already attending a denominational school, 92.4% did not agree with the proposal to withdraw free denominational travel support.

**29.** Overall, approximately 25% of respondents were in receipt of support with travel.

**30.** Whilst ethnicity did not appear to impact on preferences, those with no expressed religion or belief were more likely to agree with the option to support the withdrawal of discretionary travel.

**31.** Of the 1030 respondents, 522 submitted a comment. The nature of these comments has been broadly categorised into the following areas (ranked in frequency of mention):

- Financial Concerns
- Consultation timing
- Inadequate public transport

- Discriminatory on religious grounds
- Unfair for non-religious families
- Environmental concerns (increase in car use)
- BCC benefiting financially from current arrangement
- Removal of support would have a negative impact on child safety
- The scheme should apply to all children
- Removal of support would have adverse effect on school attendance
- Travel could be partially subsidised
- The proposal would be educationally disruptive for children

**32.** In the main most respondents expressed concerns about: the financial implications to parents of withdrawing the service; the lack of realistic alternative transport arrangements; and the impact of the proposal on Children's education and safety. The issue of timing of the consultation was also a common theme, in that the consultation began soon after parents had submitted their applications for secondary school places for September 2011. As a consequence of these specific comments, the Executive Member for Children and Young People considered that it was not appropriate to look to introduce any change in relation to the September 2011/12 academic year.

### **Public Transport Alternatives**

**33.** During the consultation a number of parents were concerned about how they might make arrangements for their children to travel to school where public transport does not effectively serve the area where they live.

**34.** Officers from City Development's Transport Division have identified the options for the pupils that they currently take to St Bede's and St Bernadette where the pupils would be required to use existing public transport alternatives:

#### **St Bedes**

- **Eastgate Centre - Muller Rd - Horfield - Southmead Road - St Bedes:**
  - There is currently no direct public transport solution for these journeys.
  - There are alternatives that require a change of bus:
    - Service 506 + 502 will serve Eastgate/Muller Road to Long Cross (at the junction with Kings Weston Lane);



- Service 76 + 40 will serve Horfield and parts of Southmead Road to the school.
- **Bishopston area - Horfield - Westbury on Trym - St Bedes.**
  - There is currently no direct public transport solution for these journeys.
  - There are alternatives that require a change of bus:
    - Service 1 + 40 will serve Westbury to St Bede's;
    - Service 505 +502 will serve Bishopston/Horfield to Long Cross (at Jct with Kings Weston Lane)
- **Glos Road - Monks Park - St Bede's**
  - There is currently no direct public transport solution for these journeys.
  - There are alternatives that require a change of bus:
    - Service 76 + 40 (changing Crow Lane) for all these journeys.
- **Southmead area - St Bede's**
  - There is currently no direct public transport solution for these journeys.
  - There are alternatives that require a change of bus:
    - Service 76 + 40 (changing Crow Lane) for all these journeys.

### **St Bernadette**

- **Fishponds - Eastville - St Bernadette**
  - There is currently no direct public transport solution for these journeys.
  - There are alternatives that require a change of bus:
    - Service 48/49 or 6 to the Centre then change to 51 to St Bernadette.
- **Speedwell - Whitehall - Brislington - St Bernadette**
  - There is currently no direct public transport solution for these journeys.
  - There are alternatives that require a change of bus:
    - Service 7 to Centre and 51 to St Bernadette; or,
    - Service 36 to Knowle and 51 on to St Bernadette
- **St George - St Anne's - St Bernadette**

- There is currently no direct public transport solution for these journeys.
- There are alternatives that require a change of bus:
  - Service 7 or 44/45 to Centre and Service 51 to St Bernadette; or,
  - Service 36 to Knowle and Service 51 on to St Bernadette.

**35.** Officers are currently exploring options for continuing the four routes to St Bede's and the three routes to St Bernadette and making a charge to non-eligible parents. This would help mitigate the impact of any changes and not add to car journeys. However, such arrangements would only be put in place if it was clear that they could be operated on a full cost recovery basis.

### **Alternative options for consideration**

**36.** Aside from the two options given in the proposal documents there are a number of alternatives that could be considered;

#### **36.1. Do nothing.**

The City Council would continue to extend the non-statutory provision of home to school travel support to those pupils attending a school on grounds of religion or belief. However the overspend in the budget would not be addressed, at least in this respect.

#### **36.2. Implement in Five Years**

This situation would allow for those pupils due to start secondary school in September 2011 to be supported with travel until the end of their secondary education. The resources allocated to support their travel arrangements would not be made available or translated into savings until 2016.

#### **36.3. Provide subsidy/partial charge to parents**

This option would be difficult to administer and there would be inequality of provision as there would still be supported travel for pupils attending denominational schools.

### **Proposal**

**37.** It is proposed that there should be a phased withdrawal of the denominational transport service. This would start with the new school cycle in September 2012. The change in this date is in response to the comments submitted to the consultation.

Parents/carers felt that they were not able to express an informed preference as details of the policy were not reflected in the summary guidance given when they made their secondary school choices.

**38.** Furthermore, because parents/guardians of pupils currently attending denominational schools and benefiting from this concession have an expectation that such provision would continue to be in place for the duration of their child's education a phased withdrawal would be the most appropriate service exit strategy.

**39.** By implementing the withdrawal of non statutory provision from September 2012 parents will have the opportunity to consider their preferences in the knowledge that, if their child were not eligible in terms of statutory provision, they would need to arrange and fund travel to school themselves, or to consider an alternative provision. The impact on the home to school travel budget of the removal of the discretionary support would be delayed by a year.

### **Recommendation**

That approval is given for the removal of discretionary (non statutory) travel for all new admissions to denominational schools with effect from September 2012.

### **Legal and Resource Implications**

The relevant legal provisions for this proposal are set out in the body of this report. In particular, paragraph 6 refers to section 580C of the Education Act 1996 which provides a discretionary power to the LA to provide free home to school travel for children attending a denominational school.

The statutory guidance on Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance says that the LA should consult widely on any changes to their local policies on school travel arrangements. This has been done. An Equalities Impact Assessment and Risk Assessment have been undertaken.

This Cabinet report sets out the reasons for the proposals and phased withdrawal of the discretionary provision. On the basis of the information set out in this report a decision to remove the discretionary provision of support for those attending denominational schools would be lawful.

*Genny Seneque, Senior Solicitor Community Service*

### **Financial Revenue**

The average cost of providing denominational travel for the last three years for Year 7 pupils has been approximately £56,000 per annum. This would suggest that the potential savings from a phased withdrawal of provision from September 2012 would be approximately £56,000, less the cost of maintaining a minimum statutory entitlement. It is not possible to predict the actual costs with any certainty until numbers travelling and entitlements have been established. As such a first year saving of £10,000 has been identified as part of the Medium Term Financial Forecast. Each year this would increase exponentially as each year group moves forward.

*Geraldine Mead, Finance Business Partner - CYPS, Resource*

### **Capital**

Not applicable.

### **Land**

Not applicable.

### **Personnel**

Not applicable

### **Risk Assessment**

A Risk Assessment has been completed and is included as Appendix D.

### **Equalities Impact Assessment**

The general equality duties set out below apply to everything the council does. All decision-takers must give due weight to the need to promote disability / gender / race equality in proportion to their relevance to the matter being decided.

S. 71(1) Race Relations Act 1976, S.49A Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and S.76 (1)A Sex Discrimination Act 1975 require that the council, in carrying out all of its functions, has due regard to the

need to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
- promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups;
- eliminate unlawful disability discrimination;
- eliminate disability related harassment of disabled persons;
- promote equality of opportunity for disabled people;
- take steps to take account of disabled persons disabilities, even where that involves treating them more favourably;
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life;
- eliminate unlawful gender-based discrimination and harassment; and
- Promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

One of the ways the council meets the general equality duties is to undertake equality impact assessments.

Appendix E contains Part One Equalities Impact Assessments in respect of the proposal.

## **Environmental Impact Assessment**

The Environmental Impact Assessment is detailed in Appendix F

- **The significant impacts of this proposal are**

The withdrawal of discretionary travel may cause a modal shift from buses to private cars. This is likely to cause a net increase in CO<sub>2</sub> and congestion, and could worsen local air quality. The extent of the effects is unknown.

**The proposals include the following measures to mitigate the impacts:**

- Review of school travel plans, promotion of public transport and other travel to school initiatives. Potentially some children may attend more local schools within walking distance of their homes.

**The net effects of the proposals are:**

- Negative. Although, potentially some children may attend more local schools within walking distance of their homes.

**The proposals include the following measures to mitigate the impacts:**

- Schools impacted by this proposal will be supported in updating their travel plans to reflect modal shift, as well as implementing mitigation measures such as car-sharing and cycling.

**Appendices:**

Appendix A	Questionnaire
Appendix B	List of Stakeholders consulted
Appendix C	Respondents by Electoral Ward
Appendix D	Risk Assessment
Appendix E	Equalities Impact Assessment
Appendix F	Environmental Impact Assessment

**ACCESS TO INFORMATION  
Background Papers**



## TRANSPORT TO DENOMINATIONAL (CHURCH) CONSULTATION FORM

**Please tick a box to indicate your preferred option:**

Either **Option A**

I do not agree with the proposal to withdraw free denominational transport and feel that the Council should continue to provide free transport between home and school for children attending their nearest appropriate Voluntary Aided denominational (Church) school where the distance between home and school is at least 2 miles for primary aged children and at least 3 miles for secondary aged children, for children starting at a school from 1 September 2011 onwards

Or **Option B**

I agree with the proposal to withdraw free transport between home and school for children attending their nearest appropriate Voluntary Aided denominational (Church) school where the distance between home and school is at least 2 miles for primary aged children and at least 3 miles for secondary aged children, for children starting at a school from 1 September 2011 onwards

**Comments (optional)**

.....  
.....  
.....

(continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

**I am a (please tick as many boxes that apply to you):**

Parent of a child applying for a Church school for September 2011

Parent of a child attending a Church school

Parent of a child attend a Community (non-Church) school

Parent of a child currently receiving home to school transport

School Governor/Staff member of a Church school

School Governor/Staff member of a Community (non-Church) school

Representative of an organisation (please give details)

Other (please give details)

My postcode is:

The information we collect will only be used to inform the analysis of responses to be included in the final report to the Council's Cabinet. We will not pass your details/information to any other agency.

You can take part in this consultation on line at: [to be inserted](#)

Or by returning this form by (insert date) to:

Denominational Transport Consultation  
c/o Room 355  
The Council House  
Free Post?

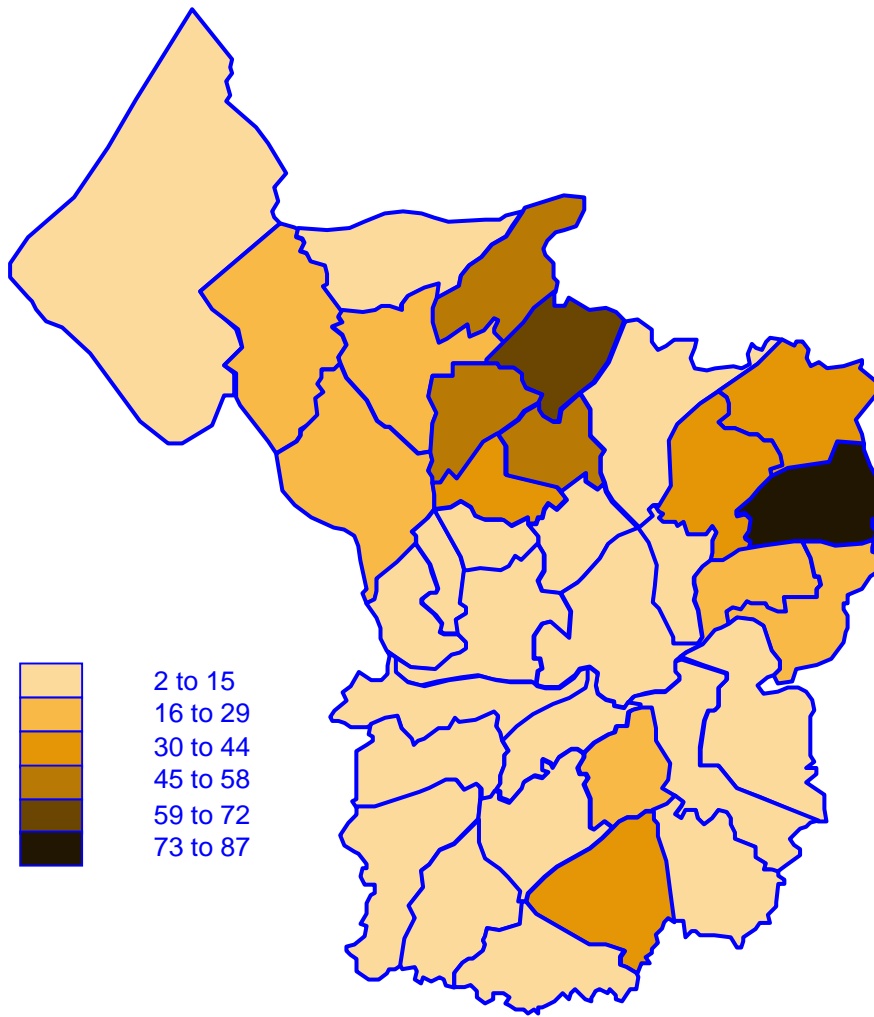


**APPENDIX B**Denominational Travel Consultation- People who have been consulted

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date email sent</u>
Headteachers and Chairs of Governors of: Easton Holy Cross Our Lady of the Rosary School of Christ the King St Bede's St Bernadette's Primary and Secondary St Bernard's St Bonaventure's St Joseph's St Mary Redcliffe and Temple St Matthias St Nicholas St Patrick's Ss Peter and Paul St Pius St Teresa's	2/11/10
Ian McNiff- Clifton Diocese	2/11/10
Admissions Forum	2/11/10
Angela King (South Glos), Ashley Ayre (Banes), Sheila Smith (North Somerset)	2/11/10
All BCC Councillors	2/11/10
Governor's Forum Executive (Louise Bale)	2/11/10
Trade Unions	2/11/10
Headteacher of Henbury Secondary (Bristol Secondary Schools Heads Association)	2/11/10
Headteacher, St Nicholas of Tolentine (Bristol Primary Heads Association)	2/11/10
MP's- Charlotte Leslie, Kerry McCarthy, Dawn Primarolo, Stephen Williams	2/11/10
Parents of children receiving concessionary travel	8/11/10
Email to 160 parents of children 2010 first choice	2/11/10
Letters to parents of children 2010 first choice	8/11/10
Letter to Eagle Coaches	5/11/10
Letter to The Coach Operators Federation	5/11/10
Email to Bristol Diocese	5/11/10
Letter to the National Secular Society	5/11/10
Letter to National Schools Council	5/11/10
Letter to parents whose children receive free bus passes	11/11/10

**APPENDIX C**

## Respondents by Electoral Ward



Bristol	725
South Glos	105
North Somerset	12
BANES	8
Incomplete Postcodes	150
Missing post codes	30
TOTAL	1030

## Risk Assessment

### Withdrawal of Denominational Travel Arrangements

No	RISK Threat to achievement of key objectives of the report	RISK CONTROL MEASURES			ASSESSMENT OF RESIDUAL RISK	
		Impact	Probability	Mitigation (ie controls) and Evaluation (ie effectiveness of mitigation)	Impact	Probability
1	If the policy is implemented it may result in parents choosing their second preference which may result in the children leaving the City Council's school. This could impact on the viability of some less popular schools as pupil backfill places within the denominational schools from the less popular schools	High	High	The analysis of second and third preferences indicated that the majority of parents have chosen Bristol Schools. If there were to be a migration of pupils from the denominational schools the places available would be backfilled by local pupils and possibly those from other authorities. Overall, provided the intake from other authorities is not unduly excessive there will be no severe impact on admission arrangements.	High	Medium
2	If the policy is implemented it could impact on the diversity of pupils within the denominational schools	High	High	There may be some impact on diversity. This may not be detrimental to the community and may ensure that the school reflects the diversity of the local community.	Medium	Medium
	<b>RISK</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Probability</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Probability</b>

3.	There may be strong negativity to the proposal if it is implemented which could translate into negative media coverage.	Medium	Medium	Ensure that the reasons for the review are transparent and that where there is opposition due to financial difficulties families are encouraged to review whether they have an entitlement to Free School meals.	Medium	Low
4.	Disruption to allocation of school places if option for Sept 2011 is chosen.	High	High	A decision to implement the changes from September 2012 would mitigate this risk.	Low	Low
5.	The number of school appeals could increase as parents look to send their children to popular/oversubscribed schools.	High	Medium	Need to ensure that parents are given sufficient information to make realistic and informed preferences.	Medium	Low
6.	There could be some absenteeism as pupil find it difficult to make long journeys to school	High	Medium	City Development is looking at options to make charges to parents wishing to fund travel on the service provided by City Development.	High	Low

**BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL**  
**Equality Impact Assessment – Part One - Screening**

**Part one of an EqIA – the screening – should be carried out at the planning and development stage of a policy, project, service, contract or strategy. This form should be used in conjunction with the guidance and as the first part of a full EqIA.**

<b>Name of policy, project, service, contract or strategy being assessed</b>	Review of Denominational Travel arrangements and possible cessation of concession other than “eligible children”.
<b>Directorate and Service</b>	Children and Young People's Services - Education Strategy and Targeted Support
<b>Names and roles of officers completing the assessment</b>	Michael Branaghan: Service Manager - Capital, Assets and Access
<b>Main contact telephone number</b>	0117 922 3384
<b>Date</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> July 2011

1. Identify the aims of the policy, project, service, contract or strategy and how it is implemented

	Key Questions	Notes / Answers	Neutral/Positive/ Negative Impacts	Any actions needed? By whom?
1.	<b>Is this a new policy, project, service, contract or strategy or a review of an existing one?</b>	<p>This is a review of an existing policy.</p> <p>It arises as an outcome of a Performance Clinic completed in 2009 which investigated Value for Money within the City Council's Home to School Travel arrangements.</p>	<p><b>Negative:</b></p> <p>The policy change proposed would result in the removal of current discretionary transport provision in relation to faith based establishments.</p> <p><b>Neutral:</b></p> <p>In relation to other elements of the Equalities Duty.</p>	<p>A consultation exercise was conducted and ended on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2010. Following the consultation, a report will be submitted to Cabinet on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2011 making a recommendation for Cabinet to consider.</p> <p>The consultation exercise is being conducted by the Capital, Assets and Access Team. The report will be prepared by the Service manager – Capital, Assets and Access.</p>
2.	<b>What is the main purpose of the policy, project, service, contract or strategy?</b>	<p>Following the recommendations of the Performance Clinic, the City Council is reviewing the concessionary travel arrangements it provides</p>	<p><b>Neutral:</b></p> <p>The policy change will clarify future eligibility criteria in the context of a changing school</p>	

	Key Questions	Notes / Answers	Neutral/Positive/ Negative Impacts	Any actions needed? By whom?
		for pupils attending Faith schools.	landscape and financial pressures.	
3.	<b>What are the main activities of the policy, project, service, contract or strategy?</b>	<p>Currently, children baptised into the relevant Faith and attending their nearest appropriate Voluntary Aided Church school are entitled to receive free home to school travel support, provided they live more than a walking distance from the school of at least 2 miles for children below the age of eight and 3 miles or more for children over the age of eight when measured by the shortest available walking route.</p> <p>Children aged between 8 and 11 years from low income families are entitled to travel support</p>	<p><b>Neutral:</b></p> <p>The policy change will clarify future eligibility criteria in the context of a changing school landscape and financial pressures.</p>	

	<b>Key Questions</b>	<b>Notes / Answers</b>	<b>Neutral/Positive/ Negative Impacts</b>	<b>Any actions needed? By whom?</b>
		<p>where they live more than two miles from their nearest, appropriate, qualifying school.</p> <p>Children aged 11 to 16 from low income families are entitled to travel support to their nearest suitable school preferred on grounds of religion or belief, where the distance from their home address to the school is more than 2 miles, but not more than 15 miles from that school.</p> <p>This service is provided even though there may be other nearer schools.</p> <p>The Council is not required by law to provide this level of service (except for those children from low income families and who satisfy the low income criteria above),</p>		



	Key Questions	Notes / Answers	Neutral/Positive/ Negative Impacts	Any actions needed? By whom?
		but in common with many other Local Authorities, has done so for many years. The City Council intends to remove the discretionary concession and only provide Home to School Travel to denominational schools for statutory “eligible children”.		
4.	<b>Who are the main beneficiaries? Whose needs are it designed to meet?</b>	Following a decision to only provide travel arrangements for “eligible Children” the following will be beneficiaries: Children in the age range of 8 to 16 who are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children unable to</li> </ul>	<b>Neutral:</b> Protection will be afforded to key equalities groups including pupils with statements of special education need. The policy will confirm entitlement based upon age. Entitlement based	None

<sup>5</sup> The statutory walking route is measured along a route that a child might reasonably be expected to walk to school (accompanied as necessary) from their home and return along at the end of the school day.

	Key Questions	Notes / Answers	Neutral/Positive/ Negative Impacts	Any actions needed? By whom?
		<p>walk to school due to their SEN, disability, or impairment;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children unable to walk in safety to school because of the nature of the route;</li> <li>• Disabled parents who would normally accompany their child to school;</li> <li>• Children living outside of the “statutory walking distance<sup>5</sup>” (where the local authority is unable to make a local placement);</li> <li>• Children entitled to free school meals, or whose parents</li> </ul>	<p>upon religious belief will continue to be provided, but the extent of provision will be reduced.</p>	

	<b>Key Questions</b>	<b>Notes / Answers</b>	<b>Neutral/Positive/ Negative Impacts</b>	<b>Any actions needed? By whom?</b>
		are in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit – primary and secondary age groups.		
5.	<b>Which staffs carries out the policy, project, service, contract or strategy?</b>	<i>The policy will be managed by the Home to School travel Team.</i>	<b>Neutral:</b>	None
6.	<b>Are there areas of the policy or function that could be governed by an officer's judgement? eg. home visits "where appropriate". If so, is there guidance on how to exercise this to prevent any possible bias/prejudice creeping in?</b>	Yes – Guidance will be given in the Home to School Travel Policy that will be amended to take into account changes approved by Cabinet.	<b>Neutral:</b>	Home to School Travel Team

	Key Questions	Notes / Answers	Neutral/Positive/ Negative Impacts	Any actions needed? By whom?
7.	<p><b>Is the Council working in Partnership with other organisations to implement this policy or function? Should this be taken into consideration? eg. Agree equalities monitoring categories</b></p> <p><b>Should the partnership arrangements have an EqlA?</b></p>	None	<b>Neutral:</b>	None
8.	<p><b>Taking the six strands of equalities: do you have any initial thoughts that any of the six equalities strands have particular needs relevant to the policy or function?</b></p> <p>Or is there anything in the</p>	<p>The Equality Act 2010, Schedule 3, Part 2 provides an exemption to discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in relation to transport to or from school.</p> <p>The Local Authority</p>	<p><b>Gender – Neutral:</b></p> <p>The policy change is not expected to have any impact in relation to gender.</p> <p><b>Transgender – Neutral:</b></p> <p>The policy change is not expected to have any</p>	None

	<b>Key Questions</b>	<b>Notes / Answers</b>	<b>Neutral/Positive/ Negative Impacts</b>	<b>Any actions needed? By whom?</b>
	<p>policy, project, service, contract or strategy that you can think of at this stage that could discriminate or disadvantage any groups of people? ie.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender (include Transgender)</li> <li>Disability</li> <li>Age</li> <li>Race</li> <li>Sexual Orientation</li> <li>Faith/Belief</li> </ul> <p>Do any other specific groups have particular needs relevant to the policy, project, service, contract or strategy?</p>	<p>remains under a general duty to have regard to the wish of a parent for their child to be provided with education at a particular establishment on the grounds of the parents' religion or belief. Other than the statutory duty towards secondary school pupils who are from low income families, there is no duty to provide free transport to denominational schools for children generally. The local authority has a statutory duty to have regard to the DfE "Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance" May 2007. Whilst the local</p>	<p>impact in relation to transgender.</p> <p><b>Disability – Neutral:</b> Transport entitlement in relation to disability is determined through the statutory statementing process (SEN). The policy changes will still provide for transport entitlement as a consequence of these processes.</p> <p><b>Age – Neutral:</b> Transport is a function arising from attendance at school. Schools are categorised by age. There are legislative</p>	

	Key Questions	Notes / Answers	Neutral/Positive/ Negative Impacts	Any actions needed? By whom?
		<p>authority has a duty to avoid unreasonable public expenditure this must be weighed against recommended good practice to phase in changes to come into effect as pupils start school</p>	<p>requirements relating to entitlement to access education/school provision. The policy change will not impact upon these requirements.</p> <p><b>Race – Neutral:</b> The policy change relates to faith/religion – not race. Although, for some communities, there may be a correlation between race and religious belief, the policy changes are clear that they relate to faith.</p> <p><b>Sexual Orientation – Neutral:</b> The policy change is not expected to have any</p>	

	Key Questions	Notes / Answers	Neutral/Positive/ Negative Impacts	Any actions needed? By whom?
			<p>impact in relation to sexual orientation.</p> <p><b>Faith/Belief – Negative:</b> As set out in previous sections, provision would still be maintained, but at a reduced level of service and in accordance with legislative requirements.</p> <p><b>Other Groups (Social economic deprivation) – Neutral:</b> The policy changes will continue to provide support for those in receipt of low incomes, such as Free School Meals entitlement.</p>	

	<b>Key Questions</b>	<b>Notes / Answers</b>	<b>Neutral/Positive/ Negative Impacts</b>	<b>Any actions needed? By whom?</b>
<b>9.</b>	Did you use any data to inform your initial thoughts above? What data do you already have?	Data from the Home to School Travel Team on the number of non “eligible children” receiving free discretionary travel to faith schools.	<b>Neutral:</b>  Recommendations have been based upon data which includes details in relation to relevant qualities strands.	None
<b>10</b>	Are there gaps in the data that require you to do further work? What are these gaps?	None	<b>Neutral:</b>	None
<b>11</b>	Impact on community relations	None	<b>Neutral:</b>  The policy change is not expected to have a negative impact on community relations.	None

If the result of the screening process is that there is the potential for a significant impact on any equality group or if any equality group has significantly different needs, then a full equality impact assessment must be carried out. If you are unsure please seek advice from a directorate or corporate equalities officer.

Signed

Signed



**APPENDIX F**

**Environment Impact Checklist**

<b>Title of report:</b> PROPOSAL TO REVIEW DISCRETIONARY DENOMINATIONAL TRANSPORT POLICY ARRANGEMENTS IN BRISTOL			
<b>Report author:</b> Mick Branaghan			
<b>Anticipated date of key decision:</b> 21 <sup>st</sup> July 2011			
<b>Summary of proposals:</b>  To phase out the non-statutory element of home to school travel support for those pupils attending denominational schools.			
Will the proposal impact on.....	Yes/No	+ive or -ive	If yes.....
			Briefly describe impact
Emission of Climate Changing Gases?	Yes	Neg	The removal of non statutory support may mean that parents will opt to drive their children to school, this would increase the number of private vehicles. (children are currently being transported by coach). Increased emissions of CO <sub>2</sub> .
Bristol's vulnerability to the effects of climate	No	N/a	

change?				
Consumption of non-renewable resources?	Yes	Neg	By increasing the number of pupils potentially travelling in private cars there will be an adverse impact on road traffic. This will impact on the environment through the use of fossil fuels.	Review of school travel plans, promotion of public transport and other travel to school initiatives. Potentially some children may attend more local schools within walking distance of their homes.
Production, recycling or disposal of waste	No	n/a		
The appearance of the city?	Yes	Neg	Due to the potential increase in parents driving their children to school there is likely to be increased congestion. This could impact particularly on the areas immediately surrounding school buildings.	Review of school travel plans, promotion of public transport and other travel to school initiatives. Potentially some children may attend more local schools within walking distance of their homes.
Pollution to land, water or air?	Yes	Neg	Increase in emissions of NOx, PM10s which contribute to poor air quality.	Review of school travel plans, promotion of public transport and other travel to school initiatives. Potentially some children may attend more local schools within walking distance of their homes.
Wildlife and habitats?	No	N/a		
<b>Consulted with:</b> <b>Steve Ransom, Sustainable City Group</b>				
<b>Summary of impacts and mitigation – to go into the Cabinet/Council Report</b>				
<b>The significant impacts of this proposal are....</b>				
Withdrawal of discretionary travel may cause a modal shift from buses to private cars. This would cause a net increase in CO <sub>2</sub> and congestion and will worsen air quality, The extent of the effects is unknown.				
<b>The proposals include the following measures to mitigate the impacts....</b>				
Schools impacted by this proposal will be supported in updating their travel plans to reflect modal shift and implementing mitigation measures, such as car-sharing and cycling. Potentially some children may attend more local schools within walking distance of their homes.				
<b>The net effects of the proposals are....</b> Negative				
<b>Checklist completed by:</b>				

Name:	Mick Branaghan
Dept.:	Children and Young People Services
Extension:	
Date:	
Verified by: Sustainable City Group	Steve Ransom