

Question: PQ17.02&03

Cabinet – 3 March 2022

Re: Agenda item 17 – Home to School Travel DPS Framework Re-commission

Questions submitted by: Hayley Hemming

Competitive tender and well thought out routes that limit travel to 45 minutes are a welcome relief for parents and carers to read; current routes can often be lengthy and isolating for children forced to travel long distances due to lack of suitable provision in Bristol.

1. My first question relates to a statement in Appendix K, P.4, which reads: “As we would expect, parents and carers want the best and safest means of transport to school for their children. This leads to a demand for taxis with an Escort to take their children to school and to resistance in enabling more independent travel as their children grow older.”

Bristol City Council are legally obliged to transport children and young people to their nearest suitable school whilst complying with their statutory safeguarding duties (which may include the use of an escort).

Why has Bristol City Council been providing transport in taxis and escorts for children and young people who are not legally entitled to them but where they have been “demanded”?

2. My second question is around the independent travel training proposals. Bristol City Council states that private transport, such as taxis, are only provided where, “there is no other suitable choice” for learners over 16 years old with SEND and that currently independent travel is encouraged via annual EHCP reviews and personal budgets and partially funded financial assistance.

www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/travel-support-for-students-16-and-over)

Is it envisaged that young people with SEND will self refer (via school/college etc) into independent travel training where they believe it will be beneficial for them or are Bristol City Council asking that every young person with SEND/an EHCP be ‘assessed’ for their suitability to potentially travel independently?