

## **Question from Nick Ireland to the Cabinet Member for Economy, Education, Learning and Skills in relation to partnership work with Essex County Council**

### Question

A recent email from the Interim Director of Children's Services to all members (swiftly followed by a press release) announced the positive news that Dorset County Council, "*with Cabinet approval*", are joining the **Partners in Practice** initiative. At which Cabinet meeting was this discussed and approved?

### Answer

The email which went out to members contained a small mistake. The decision to take up the opportunity to work partner with Essex County Council was made at the Organisational Transformation Board and not Cabinet as stated inadvertently. The Director of Children's Services apologises for not spotting this rudimentary error when he reviewed the email prior to its release.

## **Question from Nick Ireland to the Cabinet Member for Natural; and Built Environment in relation to school transport**

### Question

With the current yearly deluge of bus passes being sent out by our hard working staff to children entitled to DCC provided school transport, it appears from evidence arising from complaints I have received from constituents and also from discussions I have had with officers, that there has been a significant increase in scholars required to walk further to their designated bus stops, with many distances of over a mile and often on unlit roads with no footpaths. Is this the result of a change in DCC transport policy or the outcome of the lack of control over the routing decisions of the **One School, One Operator** contractors?

### Answer

Dorset Travel who lead on transport within the County Council have been aware about a few calls about routes where parents have expressed concern. We are not aware of any which are outside of policy, as we work closely with the operators and still maintain contact with parents who raise concerns to us. The concerns raised are not contrary to the policy which is from the start of the public highway not the threshold of the property. Gate to gate not door to door.

Colleagues in Transport planning work very closely with Dorset Travel for Walk Route Assessments to ensure that there is an independent review of routes which are expressed as a concern. They also highlight the policy that primary age children should be accompanied along routes and any necessary PPE should be considered. Personal protective equipment (**PPE**) refers to high visibility clothing which will greatly increase the safety of the children and parent/carers.

The Service Director responsible for transport has communicated with Cllr Ireland and has offered to discuss any specific issues outside of the meeting. The team continue to liaise with all members of the County Council.