



Derby City Council

Safety on School Transport

Topic Review of the Neighbourhoods Commission Chair – Councillor Barbara Jackson

A review of the current method of transporting children to and from school, and on school activities, in order to ensure safety for passengers, including the option of vehicles having one seatbelt per child.

Foreword



As Members of the Neighbourhoods Commission, we understand that our role is to challenge decisions made by the Council Cabinet, and Council policies which affect issues within our remit. We can also be approached by Cabinet Members, or asked by Council to challenge or review decisions or policies about to be made in the authority, or those already in place.

In September 2011, Council agreed that there should be a review of the current method of transporting children to and from school, and on school activities, in order to ensure safety for passengers, and the Neighbourhoods Commission welcomed this review and was pleased to take on this piece of work.

The Commission has considered the current methods of transporting children to and from schools, and reviewed evidence on the current policies and procedures in place and the implications of changes to these - namely the provision of one seatbelt for each child where this does not currently exist. Further to reviewing this evidence, the review concludes with recommendations made by the Commission, which we hope will reduce risks taken in transporting children on school activities, and increase child safety on transport whilst under the Council's care.

I would sincerely like to thank all those who have given their time in taking part in this review, providing information, and attending witness interviews to give information to the Commission. Particular thanks go to Sally Shaw of Markeaton Primary School, and Stuart Frost of Notts and Derby buses who volunteered their time and provided valuable input to the review. I would also like to thank my fellow Commission Members, Councillors Davis, Rawson, Keith, Troupe and Richards who gave up their time to attend the witness interviews, and to Councillor Linda Winter who has a particular interest in this area and attended the first two witness interview sessions.

Councillor Barbara Jackson
Chair of Neighbourhoods Commission 2011-2012

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1. Summary

- 1.1 The Neighbourhood's Commission agreed to undertake a review of Safety on School Transport at their meeting on 19 September 2011.
- 1.2 The main purpose was to conduct a review of the Council's current practices of transporting children to and from school, and on school activities, in order to ensure safety for passengers. This included looking at the option of these vehicles having one seatbelt per child.
- 1.3 The Commission decided to focus on the transport of children on contracted services, including private hire taxis on the home to school contract, the provision of school swimming transport, and the provision of transport for educational trips and visits and other school activities.
- 1.4 Other commercially provided services, such as public transport and school buses transporting children over the age of 11 from home to school (which are classed as commercial services) were not considered.
- 1.5 Evidence was collected by the commission in the form of relevant documents, policies, procedures and national guidance, as well as through emails and witness interviews.
- 1.6 After reviewing the evidence at a special topic review meeting, the Commission produced draft recommendations with a view to increasing child safety and reducing the risks associated with transporting children under the care of the Council.
- 1.7 At the Neighbourhoods Commission meeting of 06 March 2012, the draft recommendations were approved with a minor amendment to one of the recommendations for clarification.
- 1.8 The final recommendations and reasons for these recommendations are included in this report under Section 5. They will be considered by Cabinet at the meeting of 17 April 2012.

2. Aims and objectives

The review had the following aims and objectives.

2.1 Aim of the review

To ensure that Children transported by Derby City Council to schools and on school activities are done so safely.

2.2 Objectives of the review

1. To explore the current provision for school transport and on school activities including an assessment of what risks, if any, exist within the current service provision.
2. To establish what other local authorities do to ensure their passengers are safe.
3. To explore the pros and cons of vehicles having one seatbelt per child.
4. To provide clear recommendations to Council Cabinet regarding the Commission's views on any measures that need to be taken to ensure the safety of passengers.

3. Methodology

- 3.1 The Commission collected and reviewed paper-based evidence on the Council's current transport statistics, policies and procedures relating to transporting children on school activities and from home to school, as well as the legal health and safety requirements of these practices.
- 3.2 The Commission collected and reviewed national paper-based evidence from the Department for Education, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, and from the Health and Safety Executive on transporting children on coaches and buses, the use of seat belts, and transporting children on school trips. This evidence was reviewed by the Commission and used to inform the Commission's recommendations.
- 3.3 A Background Information Pack containing paper-based evidence was disseminated to Commission Members to
- 3.4 The Commission collected and reviewed anecdotal information from local schools over the phone and by email.
- 3.5 Six of the seven Commission Members, including the Chair and Vice Chair attended a Topic Review session on 17 January 2012 and heard evidence from witnesses in four sessions. Councillor Linda Winter was

also invited to the session and attended to hear evidence from witnesses in two of the four sessions.

4 Evidence collection

4.1 Documented evidence

Documented evidence was collected from Council Officers, the Council's web site and intranet, as well as from the web and from Local Authority Officers at Dudley Metropolitan District Council and Stoke on Trent City Council.

Derby City Council

- Derby City Council – School Transport Statistics.
- Derby City Council – Policy on home to school transport.
- Derby City Council – Educational Visits – Policy and Guidance for the health and safety of pupils and young people.
- Derby City Council – Generic Educational Visit Risk Assessments for Schools.
- Derby City Council – Educational Visits and Swimming: Section 2 – Guidance for safe practice in the education swimming service 2010.
- Chellaston Junior School – Health and Safety Policy

National documents

- DfES Guidance 373/2007 – Home to School Travel and Transport (published May 2007).
- ROSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) The Safety of School Transport (Revised April 2003).
- ROSPA response to DfT Consultation Paper on the use of seat belts and child restraints by child passengers on buses and coaches (12 August 2011).
- DfES Press Release on HSE School Trip Guidance.
- HSE School Trip Guidance - Department for Education Advice on Legal Duties and Powers for Local Authorities, Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies.
- House of Commons Library Standard Note on Buses: seat belts (July 2010).

Policies and practices in other local authorities

- Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council – Transport Contracts Protocol.
- Nottingham City Council – Children's Services Off Site Visits Protocol.
- Stoke on Trent City Council – Transport Conditions of Contract.

Witness interviews

A series of witnesses were called to give evidence to the Commission on this issue. Notes from each of the witness interviews can be found in Appendix C.

Witness interviews were held with:

- Derby City Council officers from Passenger Transport Operations:
 - David Dowbenko, Group Manager, Integrated Passenger Transport
 - Linda Ayriss, Passenger Transport Operations Team Leader
- Derby City Council officers from Corporate Health and Safety:
 - David Barrow – Senior Health and Safety Adviser for Children and Young People's Services.
 - Alison Burns – Health and Safety Adviser for Children and Young People's Services.
- School representative
 - Sally Shaw, School Business Manager, Markeaton Primary School
- Transport Operative
 - Stuart Frost, Manager, Notts and Derby Buses

4.3 Anecdotal and email evidence

The Commission contacted the leisure centres to ask if schools have expressed an opinion on the provision of seatbelts on swimming transport. The Commission also asked for detailed information about which schools take children for swimming lessons but do not use the swimming transport contract provided by Derby City Council.

The Moorways Swimming Tuition Co-ordinator responded by email to inform the Commission that:

'From my experience and speaking with different schools on occasion I would say that most schools would prefer it if the busses had seat belts. In some cases schools arrange their own independent transport for school swimming as it is a school policy that seat belts are provided on buses.'

Moorways Swimming Tuition Co-ordinator also informed the Commission that:

Schools that do not use the swimming transport contract transport are:

- **Mooways Sports Complex**
Boulton Primary School
St Giles School – school have own mini buses

Allenton Community Primary School
Hardwick Junior School
Chellaston Junior School
Osmaston Primary School – Walk
Bishop Lonsdale Primary School

- **Queen’s Leisure Centre**

Markeaton Primary School
Chaddesden Park Junior School
Ivy House School – school have own mini buses
St Andrew’s Primary School – school own mini buses
St Werbergh’s Primary School
Asterdale Primary School

The Commission contacted all nine schools that attend swimming lessons at either Moorways Sports Complex or Queen’s Leisure Centre (and do not have their own minibus), and are not either known to walk, or use the Council’s swimming transport contract. Three of the nine schools responded with the following information:

- Chellaston Junior School - School Administration Manager

‘Chellaston Junior School has been using Harpur’s Coaches since May 2011 because they provide buses with seatbelts and it is our school’s policy that all children transported in buses/coaches/minibuses should be fully-equipped with seat belts for their safety.’

- Hardwick Junior School – School Bursar

‘We provide alternative transport. All coaches have seatbelts and the cost is lower than offered by Derby City Council.’

- Bishop Lonsdale Junior School – School Bursar

‘Our school organises our own transport to the swimming pool as we only use buses that are fitted with seat belts.’

5 Conclusions

5.1 Swimming transport and school trips

- For longer journeys outside of the city, schools are already expected to provide vehicles with seatbelts for transporting children. Coaches and minibuses are used for longer journeys and these are already legally required to have seatbelts fitted. However, for shorter journeys using normal buses, seatbelts are not currently a requirement. Members felt that this issue should be addressed through a change in policy and guidance to schools.

- Members felt that due to anecdotal evidence and witness interviews, schools would be supportive of a requirement for seatbelts on buses on the swimming transport contract (and buses provided for school trips) to enhance child safety.
- After reviewing all the evidence gathered and presented, the Commission found that schools currently providing their own swimming transport to ensure the provision of vehicles with seatbelts, were either paying less, or only a small amount more for this provision.
- Members also felt that any increase in costs would not be prohibitive, and that schools would be able to take on these extra costs without detriment to the provision of the curriculum.

5.2 Home to School Transport

- The Neighbourhoods Commission agreed that it is outside of the remit of the Council to attempt to ensure that seatbelts are provided on buses acting as commercial services and carrying children from home to school.
- Members of the Commission heard that there are currently 6 children expected to travel in rear facing seats in private hire vehicles/hackney carriages on the home to school contract. The Commission agreed that this situation is not ideal, and that it would be in the interests of the safety of these children to recommend in Council guidance that they are not seated in rear facing seats where seatbelts are not available.

6 Recommendations and reasons for recommendations

After deliberating the evidence and discussing the conclusions of this evidence, the Neighbourhoods Commission made the following recommendations:

6.1 Recommendation 1

The City Council should amend appropriate transport policy and guidance for schools to include a requirement for vehicles with seatbelts to be used in the transportation of children on transport provided for school trips or educational visits, with the exclusion of public transport services, such as trains or buses.

Reason for recommendation

Documented evidence suggests that there is no current requirement for seatbelts to be used on shorter journeys, or those on vehicles that are not required to have seatbelts fitted (such as on privately hired buses). In the interests of safety for children, the Commission would like to see

a requirement that vehicles used are fitted with seat belts, with the exception of hackney carriages and public transport vehicles.

6.2 Recommendation 2

The City Council should amend appropriate home to school transport policy and guidance to include a recommendation that children do not sit in the rear facing seats in taxis where these seats do not have seatbelts.

Reason for recommendation

Witness and documented evidence suggests that some children are transported from home to school in taxis with rear facing seats that do not require seatbelts to be fitted. In the interests of child safety the Commission would like to recommend that children should not use the rear facing seats in these vehicles, but should be only be seated in those seats that have seatbelts provided.

6.3 Recommendation 3

The City Council should include a requirement for all vehicles used on the swimming transport contract to be fitted with seatbelts when this is sent out to tender in late 2012/early 2013.

Reason for recommendation

In the interests of child safety and parental peace of mind, the Commission would like to like see all vehicles provided on the swimming contract to be fitted with seatbelts.

6.4 Recommendation 4

The City Council should commence negotiations with the current swimming transport contractor to enable a trial of using vehicles with seatbelts to assess the timescales for getting children to and from swimming lessons.

Reason for recommendation

Witness evidence suggests that the use of seatbelts on school swimming transport is likely to lengthen the time required to get children to and from swimming lessons. This could result in the contract requiring an additional vehicle, and potentially increase the cost of the contract. A trial of this nature would ensure that the Council is aware of the timescales needed for transporting children on the swimming contract, and the number of vehicles and drivers needed to service the contract.

7 Appendix 1 - List of documented evidence considered in the Background Information Pack

1. Derby City Council – School Transport Statistics.
2. Derby City Council's Policy on home to school transport.
3. Derby City Council Educational Visits – Policy and Guidance for the health and safety of pupils and young people. *Please pay particular attention to Chapter 7 – Planning Transport.*
4. Derby City Council Generic Educational Visit Risk Assessments for Schools. *Please pay particular attention to Page 5 – Travel on Educational Visits.*
5. Educational Visits and Swimming: Section 2 – Guidance for safe practice in the education swimming service 2010. *See pages 51-52.*
6. DfES Guidance 373/2007 – Home to School Travel and Transport (published May 2007).
7. ROSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) The Safety of School Transport (Revised April 2003).
8. ROSPA response to DfT Consultation Paper on the use of seat belts and child restraints by child passengers on buses and coaches (12 August 2011).
9. DfES Press Release on HSE School Trip Guidance.
10. HSE School Trip Guidance - Department for Education Advice on Legal Duties and Powers for Local Authorities, Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies.
11. House of Commons Library Standard Note on Buses: seat belts (July 2010).

8 Appendix 2 - Witness Interview Write-Ups

Derby City Council Neighbourhoods Commission – Safety on School Transport Topic Review Witness Interviews – Session 1 (08/02/2012, 13:20-14:00)	
Present Councillor Jackson (Chair) Councillor Davis (Vice Chair) Councillors Rawson, Keith, Troup, Richards Councillor Linda Winter(invited attendee) David Dowbenko – Group Manager, Integrated Passenger Transport Linda Ayriss – Passenger Transport Operations Team Leader	
Councillor Jackson explained the aim of the topic review, what the Commission wanted to achieve, and what the Commission was expecting from the witnesses.	
1.	Please could you tell us a bit about you and your knowledge about this? Linda had been with DCC since November 1999. However she has worked in Transport role since 1994 with Leicestershire County Council. Linda is the Team Leader for the Transport Procurement and Operations Team in the Integrated Passenger Transport Group. They deal with Home to School transport (mainstream and special needs students), swimming transport, community transport, concessionary travel, and transport to adult day services. Deals with legislation, planning and strategy. David is the Group Manager for Integrated Passenger Transport Procurement Group. Linda reports to David. Linda is fully in charge of the procurement of home to school transport.
2.	What are the current contractual requirements relating to child safety for our registered transport operators? Swimming contract The swimming buses are contracted to be 49 (minimum) seat vehicles. None of these buses are fitted with seat belts. All vehicles must comply with current legislation and the driver must have direct control over the opening and closing of the passenger door. Home to School Forward facing seats must have seat belts, but there is no policy for rear-facing seats to have seat belts and this is not currently legislated. If vehicles have a 5 seat capacity and this can be filled, children are expected to sit in the rear facing seats without seat belts. Currently only

6 of the 736 children on the Home to School contract are expected to do this. The 6 students identified are all travelling over relatively short distances within an urban district where maximum speed limits are 30 miles per hour.

All vehicles meet current legislation and are compliant with licensing, and construction and use requirements. The Council might be seen as being anti-competitive if we are to stipulate a certain seatbelt configuration. LA said that the seat belt is only useful at the point of impact. However, it could be classed as a deterrent for getting out of the seat or moving around. If a child removed their seat belt the driver is not permitted to touch the child or to physically put the seat belt on the child so can only ask the child to put the seatbelt on. If there is an escort in the vehicle it is the escort's role to ensure that the seatbelt is kept on. A lot of the expectation and responsibility is with parents to talk to their children about safety and it is the responsibility with the parents and school, and partly the driver, to say to children that they should have their seatbelt on.

There are no contracted buses used on Home to School transport. All entitled children travelling by bus to and from School use commercial services. 507 students are issued with home to school bus passes, 6 of which are of primary age and travel on commercial services without seat belts.

3. How many vehicles are being used for transporting children to Moorways and Queens Leisure Centres on the swimming contracts?

There are 2 vehicles for each centre on the swimming contract. The policy requires one seat per child.

4. If the Council was to change the policy to require the swimming contract transport to have seatbelts, what sort of difference would this make to the tender process? Would operators be able to do this?

The only operator on the current contract is Notts + Derbys (part of the Trent Barton group) and they only have buses which are not required to, and don't have seatbelts fitted. Not all buses can be retrofitted with seat belts, but for those that can there is a cost associated with the retrofitting of belts, which is around £2000 for a single deck vehicle, and £3000 for a double deck vehicle.

The contract per day for each vehicle involves a very quick turnaround for journey times and therefore the inclusion of a seatbelt requirement is likely to require an extension on these times. It is likely that an extra vehicle would be needed, which would increase the cost of the contract.

5.	<p>When is the swimming contract up for review and what criteria is used?</p> <p>The swimming contract started in April 2008 and was a two-year contract with an option to extend the contract annually for up to 5 years. There is a three month termination notice and we would have to pay the contract fee for this duration if we were to terminate the contract without giving three months notice. The current contract has been extended to March 2013 and we have an option to go out for re-tender around the end of 2012.</p> <p>There are contract conditions which are sent out with the tender, but the decision is mainly based on price. A sample timetable is also sent out with the tender documents.</p> <p>Schools pay the cost of transport under the sold services package. Schools can opt to buy-in to the sold services package, or can provide alternative transport through the approved contractors list. Schools can opt in or out on an annual basis. Until the end of March the fee payable by the school each week (for a return journey) is £35. This will increase in April. Currently the Council does not pay any subsidy to make this more affordable for schools.</p> <p>The provision of seatbelts on vehicles used on the swimming contract can be built into the contract. The operators might increase the number of vehicles needed to service the contract and this would likely increase the cost of the contract.</p> <p>Re-tendering would start around December 2012/January 2013.</p>
6.	<p>Have there been any bad accidents where children may have been 'saved' if seatbelts had been fitted?</p> <p>There has only been one incident where, following a reported bang on the head, a child was subsequently taken to hospital by parents, but there is uncertainty as to whether or not the child was seated properly at the time of impact. There has never been a bad accident where children have been hurt on any home to school transport.</p>
7.	<p>How many journeys are being made each week on the swimming transport?</p> <p>There are 23 return journeys (46 trips) to Moorways (for 17 schools) and 21 return journeys (42 trips) to Queens Leisure Centre (for 18 schools).</p> <p>The accident rate is very low for the number of journeys made.</p>
8.	<p>If seatbelts are fitted, do they have to be used?</p> <p>Yes they do. The driver would have to stop. If the child is under 14 then</p>

the driver has responsibility but is not allowed to touch the child. For children over 14 it is their own responsibility.

9. Are parents aware that the children are travelling on these buses that don't have seatbelts?

Parents have become more aware over the last 12 or 18 months. There has been an incident of a parent that wouldn't let his child travel on transport without a seatbelt. There have been another couple of parents that have voiced concerns.

If they have their own schools charter which says that vehicles should be fitted with seatbelts, they wouldn't buy into the sold services contract and would buy in their own transport, but Passenger Transport Operations Team wouldn't know the reasons for schools not using the swimming contract or buying in their own transport. All primary school children have to have swimming lesson so would either be walking to the swimming facilities or arranging alternative transport.

10. Chellaston Junior School have decided to buy in their own transport, and have indicated that it is cheaper to procure services with seat belts themselves at a cheaper cost than the sold services contract. Why would this be?

Schools have not approached Passenger Transport Operations Team to say that they want vehicles with seatbelts.

The schools are paying for transport through the contract and the Passenger Transport Operations Team will provide what the schools are happy to pay for, so if they want this included in the contract and they are willing to pay the additional cost, then that can be included in the next contract. Alternatively, Passenger Transport Operations Team are happy to provide a list of approved operators and if asked would help them understand the legislation and so on.

Guidelines say that vehicles without seatbelts should be avoided for longer journeys.

The operator could have quoted a cheaper price for a number of reasons, such as it fitting in with them having a driver and vehicle on site with no other work, the profit and income margins for the company, how drivers are used and paid for (such as per day), and if the vehicle would otherwise be sat unused. Quite often the quote will be given on how it fits in with other work, and the operators are trying to use their vehicles effectively over the course of the day. The contract with Notts + Derbys fits in well with their work because they can operate it around other commercial work that they undertake each day.

<p>11. Would the amount of children getting to swimming lessons be affected?</p> <p>Not necessarily, the operators would build in the extra timescales needed to ensure children are securely wearing seatbelts before setting off into the cost of their contract to ensure that they are able to meet the terms of the contract.</p>
<p>12. How much does the Council pay towards swimming contracts?</p> <p>The Council does not subsidise the cost of swimming transport. .</p>

**Derby City Council
Neighbourhoods Commission – Safety on School Transport Topic Review
Witness Interviews – Session 2 (08/02/2012, 13:20-14:00)**

Present

Councillor Jackson (Chair)
Councillor Davis (Vice Chair)
Councillors Rawson, Keith, Troup, Richards
Councillor Linda Winter(invited attendee)

David Barrow – Senior Health and Safety Adviser
Alison Burns – Health and Safety Adviser

Councillor Jackson explained the aim of the topic review, what the Commission wanted to achieve, and what the Commission was expecting from the witnesses.

1. Please could you tell us a bit about you and your roles?

David Barrow originally moved over from Derbyshire County Council purely with Education/Children and Young People. This service amalgamated with Corporate Health and Safety Services four years ago and David still takes a lead with Children and Young People's Services. His title is Senior Health and Safety Adviser for Children and Young People's Services.

Alison Burns is Health and Safety Adviser for schools and also works within the Sure Starts, and has recently done support work within social services on auditing processes. They don't only work with schools, but also work with children's centres, Sure Starts, Adult Learning and the Youth Service.

2. What are the current legal requirements for transporting children to and from school?

Comes under Section 509 Education Act 1996. This says that the Local

	<p>Authority will provide transport for children outside of school catchment areas. It doesn't specify anything about the transport itself, and this is not an area that is normally dealt with by Corporate Health and Safety. They are normally involved with the activities and a responsibility for safety of employees carrying out those tasks.</p>
3.	<p>Do we provide guidance to schools on what they should be doing to ensure that children are transported safely, and to ensure that they are aware of our own policies and legal requirements?</p> <p>Health and Safety will give advice on risk assessments and would strongly recommend that transport with seat belts is provided for transporting children.</p>
4.	<p>In your opinion as a health and safety expert, what would the pros and cons be of ensuring that all vehicles used to transport children to and from school, or on school trips and visits, are fitted with seat belts?</p> <p>This could have a big impact on how schools can afford to deliver their curriculum activities if there is a big increase in cost.</p> <p>The majority of schools do prefer to use vehicles with seatbelts fitted for short journeys. However, they also like to take children out on public transport to teach them how to use public transport, so this would be affected if they couldn't take children on transport with no seat belts fitted.</p> <p>The Council could stipulate the requirement of seatbelts for all vehicles through our contract procedures.</p>
5.	<p>Should we be encouraging schools to stipulate a requirement for seatbelts?</p> <p>The Health and Safety Officers feel that we should encourage schools to stipulate a requirement for vehicles with seatbelts fitted, and would like to see this as a requirement.</p>

**Derby City Council
Neighbourhoods Commission – Safety on School Transport Topic Review
Witness Interviews – Session 3 (17/01/2012, 15:00-15:30)**

Present

Councillor Jackson (Chair)
Councillor Davis (Vice Chair)
Councillors Rawson, Keith, Troup, Richards

Sally Shaw – Business Support Manager, Markeaton Primary School

Councillor Jackson explained the aim of the topic review, what the Commission wanted to achieve, and what the Commission was expecting from the witnesses.

1. What Council procedures and policies does your school follow to ensure that children are transported safely?

The general policy they follow is what they found on the DCC web site. She couldn't find anything on Home to School Transport Policy and isn't sure what this is.

The school doesn't use the transport provided on the swimming contract as they prefer to use Harpur's Coaches, who have seatbelts on their vehicles. They wouldn't use a vehicle that turns up without seatbelts fitted.

2. Have you had any accidents?

No. But the school felt that they didn't want to take any risks.

3. How much does it cost to provide buses to with seat belts?

It does cost a little bit more to have seat belts. The DCC quote is £35 per return journey and the amount they pay Harpur's is £40 per return visit.

4. What promoted you to go to Harpur's instead of using the Council contract? Was there any particular incident that prompted the move to vehicles with seatbelts?

The school read in the DCC swimming transport contract that the buses do not have seatbelts, and that if you want vehicles with seatbelts you have to make your own arrangements.

The school already used Harpur's for other trips. When the swimming order came in and the school administrators realised that the buses don't have seatbelts they decided to get a quote from Harpur's.

The quote was discussed with the Headteacher, who had the final decision and agreed that moving to vehicles with seatbelts was the right thing to do. The Headteacher felt the extra cost was justified to increase child safety and reduce risk. They have been using Harpur's for 2 years now.

5.	It has been suggested that using vehicles with seatbelts is impractical due to the time taken to get children seated and strapped in. Do you find that it increases the journey time?
	No. Most children are used to getting in their parent's cars and having to use booster seats and wearing seatbelts. The teachers and teaching assistants on the bus ensure that this happens and supervise the children. Because there needs to be a certain staff to child ratio, this doesn't take very long.
6.	Have you found that due to the extra costs, you have had to back down on certain things on the curriculum?
	No.
7.	Do you hear many concerns from parents on the issues around seatbelts?
	Not many concerns were voiced, but parents are happy to comply with safety requirements.
8.	Do you think DCC policy should introduce the requirements for seatbelts on the swimming contract?
	Yes, but this is a personal opinion.
9.	How many trips does the school currently make each week?
	There is a weekly swimming trip (return journey), and then other trips depending on the time of year.
10.	Does the school use the Council's risk assessment procedure for trips and visits, or their own?
	They usually look on the internet or ask the places that they are visiting if they have a risk assessment for their activities.
11.	Does the school have a lot of contact with the Council's Health and Safety department?
	Have a fair bit of contact with David Barrow and Alison Burns on general Health and Safety issues, but not really on issues relating to transport. The Health and Safety Team have mentioned 'Evolve' but the school don't have access to it as yet. There was mention that this would be rolled out and that school administration staff would need to be trained on using it, but they haven't heard anything on this in about a year.
12.	Do we send children out on trips with teachers on public transport?
	Yes, some small groups go to learn about public transport as part of the curriculum, but these buses do not have seatbelts.

**Derby City Council
Neighbourhoods Commission – Safety on School Transport Topic Review
Witness Interviews – Session 4 (19/01/2012, 15:30-16:00)**

Present

Councillor Jackson (Chair)
Councillor Davis (Vice Chair)
Councillors Rawson, Keith, Troup, Richards

Stuart Frost – Manager, Notts and Derby Buses

Councillor Jackson explained the aim of the topic review, what the Commission wanted to achieve, and what the Commission was expecting from the witnesses.

1. Please can give us some background about your company, your seatbelt policy and the contract you provide?

They operate 26 vehicles a day to and from schools in total for commercial services, Derbyshire County Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Derby College, and Derby University.

There are very few incidents or accidents that occur for the amount of people they carry. He is aware that there have been incidents of complaints from certain people that seatbelts were not fitted after a child has bumped their head in an incident or accident.

Seatbelts are different on buses because the vehicle takes a lot of impact.

Anyone over the age of 14 is responsible for putting their own seatbelt on. Kids over the age of 14 tend to unclip their seatbelts, and then this is not the responsibility of the driver to ensure that they are done up.

2. Do your buses or coaches have seatbelts?

They don't have to fit seatbelts on buses because it isn't law, so they don't have seatbelts fitted. If DCC came to them and said that there is a contract up for tender and it is a specification of the contract for vehicles to have seatbelts fitted, then they will fit seatbelts to vehicles if they win that contract. For those vehicles on that contract.

The problems with the swimming contract is that it takes a long time to get the kids on the buses and sat down, and they only have 15 minutes from picking the kids up to getting them to the baths. When they get to the baths they pick another set of kids up and have 15 minutes to get them back to school, and then have another 15 minutes to get to another school, pick up more kids, and get back to the baths to pick up the previous group.

<p>The schedule is very tight and it is unlikely that they would be able to operate the contract within the current timescales if they had to ensure seatbelts were all fitted before departing, as the teachers would have to go around and check that all seatbelts are fitted. It is likely that each 15 minute window would be increased to 20 minutes (each way). An additional vehicle is likely to be required to service the contract.</p> <p>They currently have two vehicles. One works to and from Moorways and one works to and from Queen's Leisure Centre. You would need three vehicles to do the work that the current two are doing.</p>
<p>3. How would the provision of vehicles with seatbelts, and an extra vehicle affect the price of the contract?</p> <p>Under the current contract they get paid a daily price of £150 for each vehicle. The price of retro-fitting seatbelts to the vehicles (which is around £2000 per vehicle) would be added to the contract price. So if the contract was over 5 years, this would be divided over the 5 years of the contract and split into a daily rate. The cost of the additional bus would be an increase of £150 per day, and therefore the total cost of the vehicles themselves would be £450 per day (3 buses at £150 each per day).</p> <p>Swimming buses are dedicated to this task. Although some may be used for morning home to school journeys they would not be back in time for the evening home to school journeys.</p>
<p>4. Have many incidents occurred on the swimming transport contract?</p> <p>Over the 3-year period there have been 2, possibly 3 incidents where a child has allegedly been hurt where they have perhaps bumped their head or something like that but that's because they have not been strapped in or sat how they should have been in the first place.</p> <p>If the vehicle has been involved in an accident the driver has to fill in an accident form, however this hasn't happened during this contract.</p>
<p>5. What might be the maximum speed that a bus does from the school to Queen Street or Moorways?</p> <p>The buses on this contract do not travel at great speeds, and are unlikely to reach speeds of over 30mph, except for some parts of the ring road where they could get up to 40mph.</p>
<p>6. Do they have any trouble with older children on transport?</p> <p>No. They operate 14 vehicles to St Benedict's School (around 800 children) and don't have many problems. They issue B Line passes to all</p>

	<p>children for identification (regardless of any discount or eligibility) which enables them to report any child that misbehaves. They can be rowdy and noisy but they don't cause a lot of trouble.</p>
<p>7. What is the capacity on your buses?</p>	<p>The buses have capacity from 29-81 persons. The 81 capacity vehicles are double-decker vehicles. The swimming contract is to supply 49-seat vehicles. However, if a larger vehicle is required this can sometimes be provided, but is arranged on a weekly basis depending on availability.</p> <p>All vehicles normally have 4-5 teachers or supervisory staff on board.</p>
<p>8. Are supervisory staff spread out?</p>	<p>Yes, they are usually spread out around the vehicle. Usually one or two at the front and then one in the middle and a couple towards the back.</p> <p>Do they supervise throughout the journey?</p> <p>Yes. They have no trouble with the kids of swimming buses at all. They children tend to do exactly what they are supposed to, and what they're told.</p>
<p>9. Has the school ever turned you away because you don't have seatbelts fitted?</p>	<p>Yes, at Markeaton School, because on the previous contract with Harpur's they would provide a bus with seatbelts to the school on request if they had one, but Notts and Derby Buses don't have any buses with seatbelts as it isn't a requirement of the contract. They were told if they wanted seatbelts on the bus they would have to subsequently they no longer use the swimming contract. They told the schools that if they want seatbelts they can make alternative arrangements at their own cost.</p> <p>They would happily set this up as a separate contract but would not provide buses with seatbelts as part of the current Council contract. This is because they would incur financial penalties if the timescales were delayed and lessons or journeys missed due to an increased time taken to strap children in.</p>
<p>10. Are you able to retrofit the existing buses they have with seatbelts?</p>	<p>Yes, they can retrofit seatbelts on the existing buses. This costs £2000 for each 49 seat vehicle. 81 seat buses are used on the Home to School contracts, and are registered as commercial services. They have 3 double-decker buses fitted with seatbelts which have signs on board instructing passengers that they need to fasten their seatbelts.</p> <p>Children over 14 are responsible for their own safety and wearing their</p>

seatbelts. Children under 14 would normally have a guardian or teacher present who would be responsible. There are children between 11 and 14 on the school buses, but there are signs on the buses that say they should be wearing their own seatbelts which takes responsibility away from the driver.

11. Does the swimming contract use the older buses?

Yes, this is because the cost of the vehicle would never be recovered over the lifetime through a non-commercial contract like the swimming contract.

12. If the Council asked you to trial buses with seatbelts, would you be able to do that so that we can see whether it would actually work with the existing timetable or not?

Yes, as long as Notts and Derbys wouldn't be penalised for being late. That would be the stipulation.

13. How are Notts and Derby Buses paid?

The Council is invoiced every 28 days for vehicles at a daily rate. The schools pay the rate to the Council and the Council pays the contract.