

Safety on School Transport Topic Review

SUMMARY

- 1.1 Members agreed at the Full Council meeting on 12 September 2011 to review 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.

The Neighbourhood's Commission agreed to take on this piece of work at their meeting on 19 September 2011.

1.2 Aims and Objectives of the Review

The review had the following aims and objectives.

Aim of the review

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

The 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.

1.3 Methodology

The Commission gathered evidence from witnesses as the basis for the evidence, supported by other research carried out by the Overview and Scrutiny officer, which informed the recommendations of the Commission.

Witnesses

The following witnesses were called to give evidence to the Commission on this issue:

- Council officers
 - David Dowbenko - Group Manager, Integrated Passenger Transport.
 - Linda Ayriss, Team Leader, Transport Procurement and Operations Team, Integrated Passenger Transport Group.

- David Barrow – Senior Health and Safety Adviser (for Children and Young Peoples Services).
- Alison Burns – Health and Safety Adviser (for schools).
- Sally Shaw - Markeaton Primary School, School Business Manager
- Stuart Frost – Manager, Notts and Derbys Buses (current contract operators).

Other evidence gathered

- Derby City Council policy and guidance
- National policy and guidance
- School transport statistics for Derby City Council
- Policies and practices in other local authorities

RECOMMENDATION

2.1 To consider and agree the following recommendations:

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.
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.
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.
4. The City Council should negotiate with the current contractor to consider carrying out a trial of using vehicles with seatbelts for the swimming contract to assess the timescales for getting children to and from swimming lessons.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

2 To finalise the recommendations resulting from the Safety on School Transport Topic Review.

1. 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 the requirement of vehicles used to be fitted with seat belts when they are being transported under the care of the Council.
2. 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 seated in forward facing seats that are provided with seat belts.

3. In the interests of child safety and parental peace of mind, the Commission would like to see all vehicles provided on the swimming contract to be fitted with seatbelts.
4. 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.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Safety on School Transport Background Information Pack.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer Financial officer Human Resources officer Service Director(s) Other(s)	Philip O'Brien – Head of Democratic Services
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IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 There are potential financial implications due to a proposed recommendation for a change in the tendering requirements for swimming transport services.

Legal

- 2.1 None

Personnel

- 3.1 None

Equalities Impact

- 4.1 None

Health and Safety

- 5.1 There are potential health and safety implications due to a proposed recommendation for the provision of seatbelts on vehicles used to transport children. This could contribute to improved health and safety for school children whilst being transported under the Council's care.

Environmental Sustainability

- 6.1 None directly arising from this report.

Asset Management

- 7.1 None.

Risk Management

- 8.1 There are potential positive risk management implications due to a proposed recommendation for the provision of seatbelts on vehicles used to transport children.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 9.1 The proposed changes could contribute to the 'being safe and feeling safe' through the potential for less injuries and harm to children.