

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.
- 1.2 The Neighbourhood's Commission agreed to undertake a review of Safety on School Transport at their meeting on 19 September 2011.
- 1.3 The main purpose was to conduct a review 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.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 The final recommendations are set out in this report.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To consider the following recommendations from Neighbourhoods Commission as a result of the Safety on School Transport Topic Review:

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.

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.

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.

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.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 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 a requirement that vehicles used are fitted with seat belts, with the exception of hackney carriages and public transport vehicles.
- 3.2 Some children are currently being transported from home to school in taxis (hackney carriages) 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.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 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. To conduct a trial of the swimming contract using vehicles with seatbelts fitted would give the Council an opportunity to investigate 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 – Topic Review of the Neighbourhoods Commission. This is set out in Appendix 2.

Safety on School Transport Background Information Pack.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer	Not Applicable
Financial officer	Michael Kirk
Human Resources officer	Not Applicable
Service Director(s)	Not Applicable
Other(s)	Councillor Barbara Jackson

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Background papers:	
List of appendices:	Appendix 1: Implications Appendix 2: Safety on School Transport – Topic Review of the Neighbourhoods Commission

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 There are potential financial implications as a result of the recommendations set out in this report. However, the full costs of the recommendations are not known at this stage. It is anticipated that additional costs may be incurred by introducing these recommendations.
- 1.2 Costs associated with the home to school service are funded through the General Fund. Cabinet have approved savings of £1.1m from 2011/12 to 2013/14 with a target of £400,000 in 2012/13 and a further £400,000 in 2013/14 from a review of transport provision. This is already a difficult saving to achieve and additional cost pressures on this area would add to the overall savings required from the transport review. Restriction of the use of drop-down seats without seatbelts in private hire vehicles would have cost implications in that an additional or larger vehicle may have to be contracted for these journeys. Based upon current arrangements, this would currently amount to contracting an additional or larger vehicle for a total of 60 journeys per school week.
- 1.3 Costs associated with school swimming transport are funded by the individual school and therefore any additional costs arising in this area would have to be covered within school budgets.
- 1.4 Notts and Derby buses have agreed that they would be happy to carry out a short trial of using vehicles with seatbelts on the swimming contract at no extra cost to the Council.

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.