

SCRUTINY COMMISSION FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES	Agenda Item No. 4
18 JULY 2011	Public Report

Report of the Executive Director of Operations

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SCHOOL TRANSPORT PICK UP POINTS

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The Chair of the Commission has requested a report regarding school buses and the location of bus stops, signage, who decides where the children are picked up from / dropped off and the health and safety aspect of this.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Commission is asked to scrutinise the school bus stop data and make any necessary recommendations.

3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 3.1 Peterborough's Sustainable Community Strategy is the plan for the future of our city and the surrounding villages and rural areas. It sets the direction for the overall strategic development of Peterborough. This area of work relates directly to the Sustainable Communities Strategy, specifically the priority creating opportunities – tackling inequalities and creating strong and supportive communities.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Education Act 1996 (as amended) and Education and Inspections Act 2006 placing a duty on local authorities to make travel arrangements as they consider necessary to facilitate attendance at schools for school aged children.

Section 509(4) of the Education Act 1996 requires LA's to take certain factors in account when deciding whether or not it is necessary to make arrangements for a pupil's transport. These include:

- the pupil's age
- the nature of possible routes; and
- the wishes of the parent/carer for their child to be educated at a school or institution where the religious education provided is that of the denomination to which the parent adheres.

Approximately a third of students are transported to school, via public transport boarding and alighting service buses at registered stops.

In 2004/2005 all public transport bus stops in Peterborough were audited for the purposes of assessing the infrastructure. It concentrated on the public transport bus stops which are mainly used for school transport pick up points. Any stops that were purely school transport (and not public transport) were not audited. The information was entered into a database including photos (Kernel), but some data has since been lost due to an upgrade.

Passenger Transport Contracts and Planning are about to commence auditing the stops again, however due to resources and given the number of stops it could take approximately 5 years to complete (see Appendix 1 – example of bus stop audit form).

The location of many stops is based on historical patterns of bus passengers and over the years the stops have then been marked with poles, signage and then shelters. We are now more proactive about public transport and promotion and therefore keen to install shelters, timetable cases, public transport information to make the ‘whole journey’ more amenable. If it is brought to our attention that the location of a stop is unsafe then we assess the stop.

When a stop is installed / upgraded using LTP (Local Transport Plan) funding each stop is upgraded (shelter, raised kerbs). TfL (Transport for London) guidance is followed ensuring all bus stops are accessible. Depending on the location of the bus stop shelter would depend on what signage, timetable, shelter was installed.

School transport operators have great involvement when decisions are made to implement or modify a service ensuring all pick up points are safe for children to board and alight.

If concerns were raised by a parent/councillor/member of the public we would conduct a full risk assessment at the school bus stop.

A list of all mainstream contracted services and stops is attached (Appendix 2). Modifications to routes in Appendix 2 may be required for new intake in September 2011.

Any vehicle designed to carry more than 8 passengers, used in the performance of a school transport Contract, must display a school bus sign both front and rear, in accordance with the Road Vehicles Lighting (Amendment) Regulations 1994.

A number of rural routes are unsafe therefore a taxi would provide a door to door service and take students to a safe pick up point or to school whichever represents best value.

All contractors’ have to be approved via the rigorous procurement process of the city council which includes Health and Safety and risk assessments.

5. KEY ISSUES

5.1 No key issues.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no implications as a result of this report.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 No consultation has taken place.

8. NEXT STEPS

8.1 Recommendations by Scrutiny to considered.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

9.1 School transport timetables/database.

10. APPENDICES

10.1 Appendix 1 – Example of bus stop audit form

Appendix 2 – Mainstream school transport bus stop information