



# **School Transport Task Group: Final Report**

**Children & Young People's Services Scrutiny  
Committee**

**16 June 2010**

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# Preface

**By Councillor Jeremy Yabsley  
Chair, School Transport Task Group, Children & Young People's  
Services Scrutiny Committee**



I am very pleased to be able to present this Scrutiny review on School Transport. It has been a great privilege to chair this Task Group, which has reviewed an extremely wide and complex area.

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On behalf of the Group, I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this review including the officers from Environment, Economy and Culture (EEC) and Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) who provided members with an invaluable level of expertise and guidance, and also to thank those external witnesses who so kindly took the time to inform the review process in their evidence giving.

Overall, the Task Group was impressed and also reassured by the way in which school transport in the County is operated. Officers in the EEC and CYPS directorates work closely together to ensure the most efficient transport provision in the County for its children and young people.

I would also especially like to thank the members of the Group who contributed greatly to the process.

**Councillor Jeremy Yabsley**

# School Transport Task Group: Final Report

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Task Group — Jeremy Yabsley (Chair), Jim Knight, Michael Lee, Vanessa Newcombe, Eileen Wragg (Health and Adult Services Scrutiny) — would like to place on record its gratitude to the witnesses who contributed to the review. In submitting its recommendations, the Group has sought to ensure that its findings are supported with evidence and information to substantiate its proposals.
- 1.2 This study of school transport in the County links directly to the priority of the Council's Strategic Plan 2009–2013 in that 'Devon's children should have the best possible start in life and gain the knowledge and skills they need to lead happy, healthy and fulfilling lives'. One of the objectives under this remit is to support parents, families and carers to help children and young people enjoy learning, aim for excellence and achieve to the best of their ability.
- 1.3 This review does not pretend to be a detailed examination of school transport services in Devon. Time and resources necessitate that this review provides a snapshot approach to highlight significant issues relating to school transport.
- 1.4 The Task Group's terms of reference:
- i) To examine the transport arrangements in Devon to schools and special schools.
  - ii) To assess school transport arrangements in adverse weather.
  - iii) To consider the findings of the 14-19 Agenda Task Group and the Environment, Economy and Culture (EEC) Scrutiny Review on Winter Maintenance of the Highways Network that are also being undertaken.
  - iv) To make detailed recommendations to the Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) Scrutiny Committee on the findings of the Task Group.

## 2.0 Recommendations

The Task Group's recommendations have been drawn up using the evidence obtained from contributors and background material.

**Recommendation 1** That consideration be given to how the funding for Independent Travel Trainers can be secured longer term (or mainstreamed) given that it is such a valuable initiative to the Local Authority (LA) overall and it is dependant on year on year funding.

### *Rationale*

Members agreed that independent travel training is an excellent initiative. The scheme appears to be hugely beneficial for the young people concerned in improving their life skills and confidence, as well as helping to reduce pressure on the school transport budget with the LA making significant savings. These savings can be realised on an annual basis, as there will always be students to benefit from such training; the need for this cost effective service will not end. There is however currently no long-term stability for the scheme, as funding for Independent Travel Trainers from the Young People's Learning Agency (previously the Learning and Skills Council) is agreed a year at a time.

**Recommendation 2** That there is a model communications policy for school transport in adverse weather conditions to ensure consistency of information for parents and carers across the County.

### *Rationale*

A model policy should be adopted by all schools and governing bodies and a protocol for transport providers which clearly set out the roles and responsibilities of the various parties in terms of communicating closures to parents. This model policy should include guidance on the use of school websites and local media. Although there was excellent practice, not all schools are communicating effectively with parents.

**Recommendation 3** That the use of the Devon County Council homepage be reviewed in terms of communicating information on school closures and school transport in adverse weather.

### *Rationale*

The LA's homepage's needs to be better utilised and be fully updated to provide all relevant information for parents and students alike on those days where the weather may force schools to close.

**Recommendation 4** That schools are a priority for salting and gritting up to and including driveways and turning circles. That Highways review the gritting and salting routes accordingly.

### *Rationale*

Access to the County's schools needs to be a priority in terms of salting and gritting in adverse weather. The Task Group recognise the difficulty of gritting and salting access to every rural school in Devon.

**Recommendation 5** That clear guidelines are provided about what schools can do in terms of clearing snow and salting ice on their grounds, driveways and also adjacent pavements and school gates.

*Rationale*

Guidance from the LA is needed for schools in terms of liability and taking reasonable measures to clear snow.

**Recommendation 6** That there is clarification as to the legal responsibilities of schools when transport providers in adverse weather wish to transport children early from school.

*Rationale*

Headteachers are concerned whether to let pupils leave if they cannot be certain that a parent or guardian will be home or the pupil can access their connecting transport. Clarification is essential as to where schools are legally on this issue.

**Recommendation 7** That provision planners work closely with Devon's 14-19 Transport Coordinator to plan transport and access solutions which are sustainable for learners and deliver best value.

*Rationale*

There are significant issues to consider in terms of the 14-19 agenda and Stepping Stones, as the move towards more personalised learning will inevitably place additional demands in terms of transport. It is vital therefore, that Transport Coordination Services (TCS) continue to be creative in mapping provision and deploying resources.

**Recommendation 8** That a periodic briefing for all members be arranged on transport services (as necessary).

*Rationale*

There is such a plethora of developments occurring in terms of transport services that there is a need for a periodic members briefing, possibly before Council meetings.

### **3.0 Summary**

The new 14-19 agenda brings with it numerous complications in terms of school transport. It is a significant challenge for transport to be able to meet the array of flexible programmes likely to be offered given the rurality of Devon. In the financial year 2009/10, the transport budget was reduced by more than £800,000, at a time when there is an increasing demand for a more personalised service. Appropriate travel arrangements need to be set up alongside courses. School teachers and career advisers must be familiar with travel plans and initiatives provided to support young people's access to further education, or work placements.

It is evident that there are some excellent officers involved in managing what is an extremely challenging service to operate, yet while school transport is a complex area; it is one which the LA must remain in control of and continue to improve upon. The children and young people using school transport have to remain the absolute focus of service delivery, while the pressure on funding does make this difficult, it is of paramount importance in terms of both their safeguarding and access to education.

There are lessons to be learned from events of January 2010 in terms of school transport in adverse weather. The LA's decision to cease all school transport on 7 and 8 January 2010 was well informed and as a result largely welcomed by headteachers and parents alike. The main issue of concern was the way in which parents were notified about the decision to cancel school transport and close schools. There appears to have been confusion as to how this message was conveyed, as some parents were not informed. It needs to be clear who is responsible for notifying parents when a decision is made to close schools and not to run school transport.

## 4.0 Roles and Responsibilities of the Local Authority

There are mandatory requirements for the LA to make transport provision for some learners. These are set out under the 1944 Education Act and s.509 of the Education Act 1996 for young people under the age of 16 to and from an education setting where the young person:

- is of compulsory school age; and
- lives within the Devon LA area; and
- attends a state maintained school; and
- lives further from the school than the statutory walking distance for the child's age (legally 2 miles for those under 8 unless on a low income – see below - and 3 miles for those 8-16) and
- attends the nearest state maintained school to the home address which can provide education appropriate for the child's age and gender.

In addition to this the Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced the requirement that assistance be provided for secondary aged pupils whose family are deemed to be on a low income – those in receipt of the maximum level of working tax credit or eligible for free school meals. For these families assistance should be provided to one of the three nearest schools between two and six miles from the home address. Additionally assistance should be provided to secondary pupils on low incomes who are attending the nearest appropriate school on the basis of their religion or belief providing it is between 2 and 15 miles from the home address.

Additionally, the LA has exercised its discretion to provide free transport to and from a child's education setting for children living within the Devon LA area, with the most significant of these being:

- by reducing the walking distance expected of primary aged children aged 8 to 11 from 3 miles to 2 miles
- by providing transport to the school designated for the home address where this is not the nearest school to the home address
- to provide assistance to post 16 learners where they meet defined eligibility criteria.

School transport will no longer be provided to new faith and grammar school pupils from September 2011 unless these children meet the terms of provision under any other eligibility.

## 5.0 Findings

### Transport Funding

#### 5.1 Number of Students Transported in 2009/10 Academic Year

Entitlement Reason	No. of children October 2010	No. of children May 2010
Designated School	11,810	11,865
Post 16	4248	3414
Safety of Route	1284	1299
Special School	729	748
Nearest School	677	742
Choice of School (Concessionary children)	230	287
Low Income (under 2006 Education & Inspections Act)	177	199
Pupil Referral Unit/Link Education/PACC	127	184
School Full	166	174
Faith Grounds	138	127
Allowed at Appeal/Officer Panel	128	124
Educational Continuity Grounds	50	103
Statemented for School	83	82
Exclusion Move/Managed Move	63	64
Medical Grounds	59	58
Special Unit at Mainstream School	42	42
Other Local Authority Paying	18	21
Social Grounds/Temporary Re-housed/Temporary Foster care	16	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,045</b>	<b>19,553</b>

The two separate months above show the variations in numbers through the academic year.

#### 5.2 Cost of Transport 2009/10 Academic Year

Sector	Cost	% of cost
Primary	£3,834,268	18.33%
Secondary	£11,448,541	54.73%
Special	£4,058,807	19.4%
Post 16	£1,578,009	7.54%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£20,919,625</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figures are net of any income from charges.

#### 5.3 Annual Efficiency Savings

There has been an ongoing review of school transport to achieve annual efficiency savings on the school transport budget. The savings achieved (full year effect) since 2007 are as follows:

2007/08:	£1,247,674.90
2008/09:	£1,036,496.70
2009/10:	£818,225.95
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£3,102,397.50</b>

The target saving figure for 2010/11 financial year (in year saving rather than full year effect) is £620,000 made up of £500,000 from mainstream transport and £120,000 from special needs transport.

Significant savings have been generated by:

- initially targeting high value contracts
- reviewing mainstream networks and taking spare capacity out of the system
- new electronic tendering system, which is a more efficient way of tendering contracts.

Officers reported to the Task Group that this high level of savings cannot continue to be realised year on year.

#### 5.4 Personalised Learning

From 1 April 2010, the Local Authority has taken over the current responsibilities of the Learning and Skills Council. It is not yet fully clear as to the impact of the changes in Devon and across the Country. Transport needs to be a primary consideration in terms of designing 14-19 provision, and not an afterthought and provision planners need to be considering alternative options to moving learners around – for example peripatetic teaching and e-learning options to put the learner and their experience at the centre of provision planning. Transport and access issues have to be central in discussions for Diploma delivery and planning provision and not, as officers reported it often seems to be, just an add on. It is a significant problem, in particular in rural areas and a huge issue in terms of planning. This has recently been addressed to an extent through the 'Gateway' process that providers have to navigate when planning new diploma provision. At the moment, additional funding for Diplomas will hopefully ease current access issues, but there is no guarantee that this funding will continue in future years, nor that it will meet the scale of costs which could result from 14-19 provision development.

The statutory requirement on transport is only until 16. The LA is discretionary up until 18, but this is quite limited and is not flexible enough to meet the significant need that the changes to the 14-19 curriculum will necessitate. DCSF and YPLA advice is to facilitate learner choice through transport provision although this does not translate into a requirement for LA's to fund transport in all cases. Instead, LAs exercise discretion, but the existing 16+ transport scheme in Devon will not suffice to deliver the flexibility required to ensure young people can move easily between sites, at different times of the day etc. The current transport policy simply does not do that and there are significant cost implications.

Up until 31 March 2010, the Department for Children Schools & Families (DCSF) funded a 14-19 Transport Coordinator in the 40 most rural counties. DCC appointed Barry Green to this post and he has been working with the CYPS 14-19 team, TCS and schools to develop more sustainable transport solutions. Where establishments have taken on board suggestions, the transport network has improved with efficiency savings also being achieved. From 1 April 2010, the 14-19 Transport Coordinator post has been integrated within the new 14+ Learning and Skills Strategic Team set up with the transfer of functions from the LSC to the LA.

The efficiency savings on school transport are significant, and are difficult to realise annually, which will be complicated further with the changes to 14-19 education. At a time when the transport budget is reducing, expectations in terms of transport services are being raised, as there is a shift towards more personalised learning with the 14-19 agenda and Stepping Stones, yet the transport infrastructure is not being invested in to support these programmes. Officers expressed concern that transport will not be able to meet the array of flexible programmes likely to be offered within current resource levels.

A Task Group examining the 14-19 Agenda has also been set up by the CYPS Scrutiny Committee and the final report from this review is scheduled to be published in June 2010.

## **Special Schools**

### 5.5 Special School Transport Budget

Special school transport is one of the main pressures on the transport budget in terms of escalating costs, as this is where young people need very individual travel arrangements and specialist vehicles which are expensive to provide. As shown under point 5.1 special school transport costs account for 19.4% of the budget but only carry 4.5% of the passengers. If a special school is named in a statement, then that is a child's designated school and transport must be provided (providing the child meets the usual eligibility criteria on distance etc unless their disability means they are physically unable to walk) – unless the school has been named based on parental preference (i.e. the LA believes the child's needs could be met at a school nearer to the parents home) in which case transport costs will be the responsibility of the parent. This situation is reflected in Part 4 of the statement of SEN.

### 5.6 Ellen Tinkham Transport Review

TCS and CYPS have reviewed predominantly mainstream school routes to try to make school transport provision more efficient and establish where savings can be realised. However, a programme of reviewing special school routes has been reintroduced. The first of these reviews was carried out in 2009 on the travel arrangements for Ellen Tinkham School in Exeter. The Task Group received evidence that following the Ellen Tinkham review, changes were made to transport arrangements in the middle of term which were hugely problematic for the children and parents concerned. Change can be highly disturbing for young people with SEN and needs to be carefully managed. Where changes have to be brought in these should be implemented at the start of an academic year and be properly organised.

Officers advised that as a result of the Ellen Tinkham review and the feedback received, CYPS/TCS have identified improvements that can be made for future reviews at special schools including the need for greater lead time to make all parties feel adequately involved. As a result of which officers drafted a Special School Transport Review Guide which sets out a framework for approaching future special school transport reviews. The Guide will be used to support the two special school transport reviews that will take place this financial year identified as part of the budget setting process for 2010/11.

### 5.7 Travel Time for SEN Pupils

It is something of an anomaly that those children for whom it is most difficult may need to travel considerable distances to attend a suitable educational provision. There are logistical issues in a rural County such as Devon in terms of distance and travel time for children and young people with SEN. The LA's policy says, "The maximum journey should not exceed forty-five minutes for pupils of primary age and one hour and fifteen minutes for pupils of secondary age. There may be exceptions for attendance at a special school, attendance at a remote school or institution in order to avoid exclusion, or attendance at a remote school following a move in order to maintain educational continuity".

The Task Group received representations that transport should follow a statement, and there should not be the situation where parents have also to fight for their child's school transport as well as in many cases their child's statement of SEN, which creates unnecessary and unreasonable further stress for parents.

### 5.8 School Escorts

Escorts are employed by either the LA or the transport contractors. Training for all escorts is delivered in house by the LA. The LA will deal with complaints about an individual school escort, including those provided by a contractor. Drivers and

escorts both have to wear an ID badge to prove who they are and that they have been CRB checked.

#### 5.9 Pupil Codes of Conduct

CYPS send out behaviour contracts to all children and young people. CYPS have various versions of the Pupil Code of Conduct – a standard one for primary and secondary, a specific 16+ one, and a version for children with complex SEN. The SEN version was developed in partnership with Lampard Special School. CYPS officers look at the child's statement of SEN and the school attended and make a judgement about which version of the code is most appropriate to send to a child with SEN. The covering letter acknowledges that as the child has special needs they may not understand the code of conduct and in this case parents are asked to try their best to explain and for them to sign it on their child's behalf. It is as much to ensure that parents are aware of how poor behaviour on transport is dealt with as much as for pupils. In some cases the special needs of the child make it difficult to determine whether poor behaviour is just that or part of the SEN – this is taken into account when incidents are considered and dealt with.

#### 5.10 Medicines

There are medical protocols in place which are obtained from either parents or schools for all children known to need to carry emergency medication. Officers also obtain parental consent forms where it is possible that medication may need to be administered by an escort during a school transport journey. The medical protocol includes the child's name, the drugs involved, the dosage and how to administer. Schools are required to update if there is any change to the medical protocol and alongside this the protocols are reviewed annually.

Medication is generally stored in the child's bag on the journey. At Ellen Tinkham, medicines are carried in small boxes which are child proof within the child's bag. Good practice that the LA promotes requires medicines to be handed to the school nurse upon arrival of the child at school so they can be stored securely during the day and collected later for the journey home. Medical protocols are supported by what are known as the red and yellow folders which escorts hold and which include more detailed information on the individual children assigned to them.

#### 5.11 Independent Travel Training

The LA has set up a scheme to provide travel training for young people currently travelling to school or college on assisted transport who may need help to learn how to travel on their own safely. The scheme has been funded through the Young People's Learning Agency 14-19 Transport Partnership. After an initial pilot, two full time trainers were appointed. In the first year, 34 students were trained. In addition to the benefit to the young people concerned in developing their independence, there is an additional cost benefit to the LA.

The first academic year of operating the scheme 2008/09 cost £47,000 which included set up costs and staffing. However, the full year effect of the savings by students travelling independently rather than by taxi transport was £54,000. The current spend on taxi transport is approximately £2,300,000 per annum. The initiative has revealed a number of cases where young people are using taxis when they do not need to be, and savings can continue to be realised challenging the culture that all special school pupils need taxis. This flexibility continues as the young people move to adulthood and may become the responsibility of ACS. In 2010/11 the two trainers are working with 48 students that have either been trained, are being trained or on the waiting list.

Working closely with the child's school or college trainers help identify and practice the skills a young person needs to be able to travel alone safely. This could include road safety, money skills, telling the time and what to do in an emergency. The one-on-one element of the training is crucial and the key to the programmes success. Before any child is allowed to travel on their own a thorough risk

assessment is carried out. A child will never be allowed to travel on their own until everyone agrees and is happy that they are able to do so safely, and regular assessments of the appropriateness of travel arrangements are undertaken. There has been no incidence of a young person on the scheme coming to any harm using public transport.

Independent travel training highlights young people's strengths, and addresses weaknesses. The process is as extensive as the student needs; some young people need only a couple of sessions, while there are others that have little understanding of road safety. It is a positive educational experience, of which there are many related benefits:

- increased confidence through arriving at school or college on their own and not on assisted transport
- more opportunities to develop social skills
- easier to make new friends and meet up with the ones they already have
- independent travel to other places such as the cinema, after school clubs, work placements etc
- less dependent on friends and family and have greater freedom.
- help their transition to ACS
- behaviour is reported less of a problem with those children arriving on public transport as opposed to taxis.

The scheme has an extremely high success rate; in fact, it is very rare where a young person involved is not now using public transport. Quite often, the barrier to independent travel comes from the parents. Parents are starting to understand the benefits of this initiative, and word is spreading amongst parent support groups. There is however currently a waiting list for young people to take part in the scheme and a significant gap in provision in the South Devon area, which is difficult for the existing travel trainers to access. An additional trainer will increase the number of young people accessing the scheme, and result in increased savings to the LA.

## **Adverse Weather**

### 5.12 Overview of January 2010

On 7 and 8 January 2010 all school transport in Devon was cancelled due to the adverse weather. The Emergency Planning Group met on 6 January 2010 to discuss the weather forecast. Based on advice from colleagues in Highways and the Police, and after further discussion with the Chief Executive a decision was made in what were exceptional circumstances that no school transport would run on the Thursday and Friday due to the severity of the weather. Most schools are not on primary routes and therefore not on the gritted network. Some schools had already decided that they were going to close, and by making an early decision on cancelling school transport, it meant that providers were given some advance notice as they were notified immediately by email. It was decided that transport should recommence on the following Monday, 11 January, although only where providers felt it safe to do so. By Friday 15 January, only 12 school routes were still not in operation.

### 5.13 Complaints - January 2010

TCS advised that they are constantly reacting to incidents but this was a very unusual scenario in that the severity of the adverse weather was countywide. In most cases, officers felt that the right decisions were taken. There were some individual complaints but there were actually more compliments about the LAs clear approach to dealing with the situation, and the Customer Service Centre helped in being one main point of contact for the public. Officers reported that the complaints were mainly focussed on where parents were not sure whether transport was running again. TCS and CYPS will still undertake their own review to examine areas where they could improve upon.

The Task Group received complaints that the decision to stop all school transport was an overreaction, where local decisions should have been taken on local schools and transport routes. The Chair of DASH felt that the majority of headteachers welcomed this central decision in taking some pressure off headteachers, although blanket school closures could probably have continued on the Monday as well given that the weather had not improved and may in some places have worsened.

#### 5.14 Communication - January 2010

Evidence indicates that there was not a consistency of communication in terms of school closures and school transport. There is a need to improve information flows. Some schools have pyramid calling set up which is quite an effective way of passing on information. Local radio is a good way of reaching people, and some of the stations were reported to have been excellent, but it does not necessarily cover all schools, nor does it reach all parents and needs to be part of a wider approach which encompasses the use of the DCC website along with possibly email and text. Schools should ensure that their own websites are updated in such circumstances of adverse weather as experienced this year. The Task Group was also advised that at present it is far from easy to find the list of school closures on the DCC website.

DASH reported that there is an issue about what actions schools should take in adverse weather where a school transport provider insists that students on their buses need to leave at lunchtime for instance. Schools do not know whether to let pupils leave if they cannot be certain that a parent or guardian will be home, or the pupil can access their connecting transport. Officers reported that in these instances of adverse weather contractors are advised to liaise with TCS.

#### 5.15 Schools Responsibilities for Clearing Snow

The Task Group felt that while there is a limit in terms of what the LA can reasonably be expected to do, schools need to be issued with guidance about clearing snow and ice from school gates and paths as there appears to be some confusion about liability. It was reported to the Group that if schools feel that they do not have the manpower or resources to clear/treat all paths then they should consider treating the principal paths/entrance points and then closing off the others with appropriate temporary signs or locked gates. Just because all risk cannot be eliminated this should not be used as an excuse to take no action at all and leave paths in an icy and dangerous state.

### **Other Issues for School Transport**

#### 5.16 Designated FE Colleges

The LA's policy is clear in terms of designated FE colleges. If a child or young person does not attend their designated college, then they do not receive transport unless they can demonstrate that a qualification offered at a preferred college is *essential* to their future career. The problem is that in some cases designated colleges can be a considerable distance further away than a young person's nearest college.

Evidence indicates the need for rationalisation in some designated FE college transport areas. Particularly problematic is East Devon where pupils often want to attend Exeter College which for many young people is much more convenient but they can only access free transport to Petroc College (Tiverton) considerably further away. There are similar issues across the County such as pupils in North Devon reportedly having to travel in some cases up to 4 hours a day to the Petroc College site in Barnstaple, the designated FE College for Holsworthy, when Budehaven College in Cornwall is only 9 miles away, and Exeter is also more readily accessible than Barnstaple. There are some young people who do currently undertake long journeys to school. DCC policy for secondary age pupils is that the maximum journey time is up to 75 minutes each way, but there is no limit in terms

of FE. This problem could be exacerbated with the new 14-19 agenda. It is vital that due consideration is given as to how young people will access a course as part of 14-19 transport policy.

#### 5.17 Managed Moves

Officers advised that there have been issues in terms of schools following the agreed process when arranging managed moves. There is a requirement that schools seek advice from CYPS regarding travel options prior to making firm arrangements and in many cases this was not happening with the placement being agreed and school transport then being asked to arrange often costly transport arrangements. Concern was expressed to the Task Group about managed moves breaking down because of issues with transport. It was reported that there have been particular difficulties with managed moves in North Devon, which has the highest number of permanent exclusions. There are huge distances between some schools in North Devon, and managed moves will only work where transport is in place. The Task Group however recognised that there has been progress in transport for managed moves through a CYPS transport officer attending local headteacher panels wherever possible to ensure that transport is a consideration in agreeing a placement.

#### 5.18 Children in Care

The LA tries not to move children in care's schools when they change foster placement. The most vulnerable children need to keep whatever stability they have in their lives, and the overriding issue has to be about supporting a child in care's placement; school transport should be a given. Costs for much of this transport are currently borne by Social Care. Transport policy states that where a child in care is moved to a temporary placement then school transport will pay up to £35 per day towards transport costs for a period of up to 12 weeks. This is exactly the same approach as for all parents. If a care move is permanent then no support is provided by school transport.

#### 5.19 Managing Risk

In terms of tendering school transport contracts, although price is obviously a key element before an agreement is finalised, the provider is scrutinised and approved by the Safety, Compliance and Fleet Team, who oversee the activities of all contractors in the County providing school transport. Officers visit the contractor to inspect vehicles and relevant documentation. All drivers and escorts have enhanced level CRB check, and as of later this year an Independent Safeguarding Authority registration. Drivers and escorts having passed the relevant checks will receive an identity card, which they must wear at all times while working. If a transport provider sells their business, a process is in place whereby the new owners and staff also have to be fully checked and approved as any new contract provider would be. Central to the Safety, Compliance and Fleet Team's workings is a holistic risk assessment to cover all activity. The LA also works closely with licensing authorities, the Police and Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) to filter out any unsuitable providers and rogue elements. There is also an ongoing programme throughout the year of school bus checks, led by the Police to monitor the safety of vehicles.

CYPS undertake an assessment on children with SEN in terms of their school transport, which includes the specialist equipment they may need. All escorts are issued with an information pack on pupils SEN which includes personal information on the young person's medical needs. A driver's handbook provides step-by-step advice and guidance to drivers. TCS produced a DVD entitled Stop the Bus, which was distributed around the County and is an instruction guide to pupils and drivers about behaviour on buses. Drivers are given training and are certificated in wheelchair transportation on buses.

5.20 Supervision on School Transport

The lack of adult supervision on school transport is a concern of DASH. Some buses contain up to 53 pupils with only the driver to supervise. There is a behaviour and incident code that states that schools have the responsibility for behaviour on school transport which reflects the new statutory requirements introduced through the Education and Inspections Act 2006, but without anyone to supervise, it is something of a problem. As soon as pupils get to school there is this issue about responsible adult to pupil ratio, but it does not exist in terms of school transport. Bus drivers will report incidents to the bus company, who in turn will contact TCS, who will then report back to the school.

5.21 Learning Platform

Members agreed to endorse the recommendation that went to CYPS Scrutiny on 12 February 2010 'that schools be encouraged to engage with the technology available and establish a suitable Learning Platform to support this'.

Jeremy Yabsley  
Jim Knight  
Michael Lee  
Vanessa Newcombe  
Eileen Wragg

Electoral Divisions: All  
Executive Member: Councillor Andrea Davis (Cabinet Member for Children's Health and Well Being)

<b>Local Government Act 1972 List of Background Papers</b>		
Report originated by:	Dan Looker	
Room:	G.36	
Tel No:	01392 382722	
Background Paper	Date	File Reference
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## Appendix 1:

### Task Group Activities

- A1.1 The first meeting of the Task Group took place on **28 January 2010**. The aim of this initial scoping meeting was to determine the focus for the investigation, gauge members' viewpoints and plan the next steps for the review. The session was attended by the Passenger Services Manager, EEC and the Schools Access Services Manager, CYPS, who provided background information to the Task Group.
- A1.2 On **22 February 2010** the Task Group received evidence from the Cabinet Member for Children's Health and Well Being.
- A1.3 On **4 March 2010** the Task Group met with Cabinet Member for Schools and Skills; Governor, Ellen Tinkham Special School, Exeter; Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation; Transport Co-ordination Service Manager, EEC and County Chair/ Locality Chairperson for North Devon Parent Carer Voice.
- A1.4 On **31 March 2010** the Task Group met with Independent Travel Trainer, EEC /, Passenger Services Manager, EEC and Chair, DASH. The Task Group then proceeded to discuss its findings and possible recommendations.
- A1.5 On **9 April 2010** the Task Group discussed the draft report.
- A1.6 On **13 May 2010** the Task Group met the Senior Transport Co-ordination Officer, EEC and the Passenger Services Manager, EEC, Members then continued the process of finalising the draft report.

## Appendix 2:

### Contributors / Representations to the Review

#### A2.1 Witnesses to the review (in the order that they appeared before the Task Group)

<b>Witness</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Damien Jones	Passenger Services Manager, Environment, Economy and Culture (EEC)	Devon County Council (DCC)
Lisa Boon	Schools Access Services Manager, Children and Young People's Services (CYPS)	DCC
Councillor Andrea Davis	Cabinet Member for Children's Health and Well Being	DCC
Christine Channon	Cabinet Member for Schools and Skills	DCC
Councillor Saxon Spence	Governor	Ellen Tinkham Special School
Councillor Stuart Hughes	Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation	DCC
Bruce Thompson	Transport Co-ordination Service Manager, EEC	DCC
Jeannette Kemlo	County Chair/ Locality Chairperson for North Devon	Parent Carer Voice
Karen Hegarty	Independent Travel Trainer, EEC	DCC
David Fitzsimmons	Chair	Devon Association of Secondary Headteachers (DASH)
Paul Edmonds	Senior Transport Co-ordination Officer, EEC	DCC

#### A2.2 Written Representations (in the order that they were received)

<b>Witness</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organisation/District</b>
Councillor Christine Marsh	Vice Chair CYPS Scrutiny Committee	DCC
Joseph Wood	Devon Health & Safety Adviser, Corporate Resources	DCC

## **Appendix 3:**

### **Bibliography**

- Children and Young People's Plan 2008-2011 (DCC, 2008)
- Delivering 14-19 Reform: Next Steps (DCSF, 2008)
- Delivering the 2013 Diploma Entitlement: guidance to local authorities and providers (DCSF, 2009)
- Draft Education Transport Policy – From the academic year 2010-11 (DCC, 2010)
- Home to School / College Transport Policy – From September 2008 (DCC, 2008)
- Severe Weather Conditions: January 2010, Report of the Executive Director of CYPS, CYPS Scrutiny Committee (DCC, 2010)
- Relevant information from evidence base, 14-19 Agenda Task Group, CYPS Scrutiny Committee (DCC, 2010)
- Relevant information from evidence base, Winter Maintenance of the Highways Network Task Group, EEC Scrutiny Committee (DCC, 2010)