

Education and Lifelong Learning Committee

ELL2 16-04(p.6)

MINUTES OF MEETING

WITH

SMALLER BUS OPERATORS IN NORTH WALES

4TH NOVEMBER 2004

18:30HRS

RISBOROUGH HALL

LLANDUDNO

Present

Fred Edwards - George Edwards & Son

Selwyn Williams - T E Williams & Son

Mr & Mrs Bryan Japeth - Berwyn Coaches

Chris Jones Abacab - Mini Coaches

Kevin Jones - Express Motors

Keith & Mark Davies - Pats Coaches

Tony Strafford - Straffords Coaches

Chris Owens - NWCOA

Adam Owens - NWCOA

John Jones

Kevin Williams

Elfyn Thomas - Silver Star

Michael Morris - Tanat Valley

Nick Culliford - Tanat Valley

Apologies

M&H Coaches, Will Howard, Steve Jones, Llew Jones and David Evans

1. Yellow Bus

Felt that they were not really better or necessary – less flexible – no clear view however.

2. Double Deck Vehicles

Mixed views – serious safety problem, however, in some areas with highway authorities failing to cut trees back.

3. Age Limit to Vehicles

Some viewed this as not necessary – issue is quality and image.

4. Risk Assessments

Generally operators not involved – raised serious issues of procedures and safety both with LEA's, Schools and operators.

5. Behaviour Issues

Variable problem depending on LEA – would welcome effective codes of conduct and discipline.

Vandalism on vehicles (seat slashing) – Gwynedd and Flintshire produced codes and booklets but never got home to parents. Problems of late issue of passes to parents/ children at start of every school year – resulting in overloads and inability to control numbers on buses hence overcrowding. In spite of yellow buses, still seem to be behavioural problems in parts of Wrexham. Powys thought to be good in this regard.

6. CCTV & Escorts

CCTV thought to be good (experience in Wrexham) more practical than escorts in most cases – problem the need to sort out Data Protection Act issues. If escorts used would have to be employed by LEA.

7. Training

No evidence of any training of drivers to handle children amongst operators. Any training would have to be of high quality. No interest in some authorities in doing safety training with year 6 children.

8. CRB Check

General view that it is currently mismanaged – Gwynedd suspected doing no checks, Wrexham drivers have to wear ID badges. Joint approach needed.

9. Audit

Audit checks acceptable, but must be professional and opportunity to examine both operators, LEA and schools conduct and professionalism.

10. Length of Contracts

Generally request 5 years, 10 years when new vehicles involved. Penalty clauses must be last resort and fair.

11. Special Needs Childre

It was felt by some that integration and a requirement for more low floor vehicles would be a problem.