

# Education and Lifelong Learning Committee

## ELL2 16-04(p.7)

### SUMMARY OF MEETING WITH SMALLER BUS OPERATORS RE NAG. OF WALES REVIEW OF SCHOOL TRANSPORT OPERATIONS ON TUESDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER - 1100 HRS. JARVIS RAMADA HOTEL, SWANSEA

#### 1. VEHICLES

(i) Generally accepted that retractable seat belts aid safety. **However, most school contract coaches are fitted with lap belts.** Responsibility for fastening and using belt must be with each student and incorporated into Codes of Conduct. (see below).

(ii) Security cameras aid behavioural problem resolution and should be fitted as standard over the next few years. (requires agreed Codes of Conduct and discipline).

(iii) Thought that operation of double deck vehicles with cameras an option to 69/70 single deck vehicle, but reducing double deck operation will reduce behavioural problems.

(iv) Vehicle age limit of 15 yrs. Not felt to be unreasonable providing case can be made to LEA's for the 'odd' exception where a vehicle is **rebodied**.

(v) If new vehicles required by contract, contract should be of a minimum of 10 years with no escape for LEA except breach of contract by operator.

(vi) Concern over lack of **economic** flexibility of 69/70 set single deck vehicles - cannot be used on other work easily. To be economical vehicles would require to be double tripped (implications for school starting/

finishing times).

## 2. BEHAVIOURAL ISSUES

(i) Must be clear areas of responsibility for pupil, parents, operator, school and LEA. Grey areas (e.g. bus to school gate) no longer acceptable.

(ii) Must be clear Codes of Conduct and disciplinary code understood by all and consistently followed and applied.

(iii) All pupils must be clearly identified by photo cards **which must be carried at all times** and parents must sign **a contract** to accept responsibility for child's behaviour, agreement to code and any damage caused before issue of pass.

## 2. SAFETY ISSUES

(i) See vehicles (section 1) and (see section 2 behavioural issues).

(ii) The environment around each school should be subject to a safety audit regularly with appropriate traffic orders **which are fast tracked** and proper enforcement to allow safe movement of all pupils.

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(iii) Agreed Codes of Conduct for drivers, operator pupil, and parent school LEA, essential with consistent enforcement.

(iv) Pool of trained escorts to be available to deal quickly with serious behavioural problems on a particular bus or at a particular school in each LEA area **supplied by local authorities**.

## 4. OPERATOR ISSUES

(i) Acceptance that regular annual driver training must be done to better equip drivers to handle the challenging behaviour of children. Operators will to pay wage cost of drivers attending.

Suggestion - LEA's to pay training costs and cost of venues.

(ii) All drivers to carry mobile phones (or radio equipped vehicles) for

emergency and other purposes.

(iii) CRB checks on drivers to be undertaken by lead LEA's either centrally or by NAG of Wales Transport region with co-ordination cost to be borne by LEA's.

(iv) No operations outside PCV and/or Hackney/Private Hire Licensing by any LEA.

(v) Regular audit by F.T.A. or other professional bodies acceptable subject to post audit meeting and operators being able to comment.

## 5. CONTRACT ISSUES

(i) Same rules should apply to contract and local bus arrangements generally.

(ii) Simplified standardised contract would be welcomed. Penalties for poor performance acceptable - suggest Swansea C.C. model.

(iii) Contract lengths should be for a minimum of 5 years, 10 years for new vehicles (where required).

(iv) Contracts should contain a realistic RPI clause that is related to transport cost increases and not general RPI inflation.

i. Where operators have purchased new vehicles or new equipment for vehicles (e.g. seatbelts or CCTV) then LEA's should not have ability to cancel contract except where there is operational failure.

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(vi) If it is considered desirable to start integrating special transport with mainstream school transport this should be done gradually as more second-hand low floor vehicles (capable of accommodating wheelchairs) become available.

(vii) To get more effective use of existing drivers and buses (and contain costs) school start/finish times should be capable of variation to enable vehicles to double trip.

## LIST OF ATTENDEES

TUESDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2004 AT JARVIS RAMADA HOTEL,  
SWANSEA

### NAME COMPANY

Janet Hawkes Hawkes Coaches

Robert Edwards Edwards Bros.

Jones Jones Login

Tom Thomas Williams Bro.

Robert Davies P.T.S.

Gareth Evans Long's Abercrave

Gwyn Jones Gwyn Jones

Joplings Coaches

Jan Warner Millbrook Mini Coaches

Jeff Fussell Millbrook Mini Coaches

Darren Ridgway Ridgway Coaches

Adrian Walters Airport Express

Katie Griffiths Lets Go Travel