

**POLICING ARRANGEMENTS ON CONTRACTUAL COMPLIANCE ON
EDUCATION TRANSPORT SERVICES**

To: **Audit & Accounts Committee**

Date: **Tuesday 7th June 2016**

From: **Paul Nelson, Interim Head of Passenger
Transport Services**

Electoral Division(s): **All**

Purpose: **Report on policing arrangements on
contractual compliance in Education Transport
Services.**

Recommendation: **The Committee is asked to note and comment on
the arrangements in place.**

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1. Background

- 1.1 At the previous Committee Meeting Members considered an audit report on safeguarding on home to school transport contracts and requested a report on policing arrangements on contractual compliance in this area to be presented to the June meeting.

2. Policing arrangements on contractual compliance

- 2.1 The monitoring team consists of three officers to cover all contracts in Cambridgeshire, and was introduced in September 2009 following an internal audit and Member approval. In addition to the regular team, there are also two members of staff who are primarily involved in driver and escort training, but who also help out for additional checks if required.
- 2.2 Compliance checks are carried out on a routine programmed basis throughout the year, with the aim of checking every home to school contract at least once a year. There are currently around 870 contracts operating each day and in practice this programme is achieved by carrying out checks at every school that has transport provided, which in 2014/15 was 221. A check was carried out at all schools in 2014/15, which is the last full year of information as our records are by academic year.
- 2.3 In addition to the routine checking programme, there are spot checks carried out in conjunction with officers from the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA). These checks are led by the DVSA but with support from our own monitoring team.
- 2.4 Finally, checks are also carried out if specific complaints are received or issues raised, and these will normally take priority over the routine checking programme. These issues are primarily raised by schools, parents, other operators or members of the public. In 2014/15 there were 122 such complaints including timekeeping, bus stop locations, overloading of vehicles, student behaviour, driver behaviour and overgrown trees.
- 2.5 The aim of the compliance checks include timekeeping, vehicle size, licence checks, wheelchairs and restraints being appropriately used and whether drivers and passenger assistants (PAs) have been cleared through the DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) process. The checks do not include mechanical checks as this is a function carried out by the DVSA staff during joint operations.
- 2.6 In 2014/15 checks were carried out on 927 drivers and PAs, with 19 (2%) not having a completed DBS check through the County Council. A number of these will be taxi drivers who will have a check through the

appropriate District Council, but who are still required to be approved by the County Council. As a comparison the figure of unchecked drivers in 2010/11 was 7%.

- 2.7 Work is progressing on the implementation of the recommendations in the audit report. Three recommendations have been completed on time or early, and these involve making operators aware of the checking process, the requirement for rechecks every three years and the implications for them if their drivers are not compliant.
- 2.8 The other recommendations are programmed for September and are on target. The aim of the changes are to strengthen the penalty points issued through the contract so that there is a real deterrent to operators trying to provide drivers that do not have DBS clearance.
- 2.9 In addition, a protocol will be developed that can be distributed to operators, so that they are aware of their responsibilities, and to schools and parents so that they know who to report any concerns to that can then be followed up. The intention behind these changes is to further reduce the current 2% failure rate.

Background Documents: Internal Audit Report, Home to School Transport – Education Transport, March 2016.