

To: Education Resources Sub- Committee	Subject: Seatbelts on school transport
From: Director of Education	
Date: November 2006	Ref: MM/MB

Purpose of Report

This report describes the council position with regard to seatbelts on school transport.

Recommendations

The Education Committee is recommended to: -

- i) note the position with regards to seat belt provision on contracts providing school transport, including recent amendments to seat belt legislation.
- ii) note the cost implication of charging the Conditions of Contract to make the provision of seat belts mandatory.



Members wishing further information about this paper should contact:

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NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Provision of Seat Belts on School Transport

Report by the Director of Education

1. Background

1.1 A report outlining the changes to legislation on seat belts/restraints was submitted to Education (Resources) Sub-Committee on 12 October 2006. The committee requested a further report detailing the current position regarding seat belts/restraints on all school transport.

1.2 The current legislation on seat belts includes the following provision:

- i) All minibuses must have seat belts.
- ii) Service buses and double decked buses do not require seat belts to be fitted.
- iii) Coaches with a speed restriction of less than 62.5 mph do not require seat belts to be fitted.
- iv) Licensed taxis and private hire vehicles must be fitted with seat belts.
- v) Registered service buses i.e fare paying, do not require seat belts to be fitted.

2. Mainstream Transport in North Lanarkshire

2.1 In the tendering of new contracts, contractors are invited to submit prices for both provision and non-provision of seat belts. Tenders with seat belts are preferred where the price is lower or similar to those without seat belt provision.

Of these, 138 contracts include seat belts, and 139 contracts do not provide seat belts. At present 49.8% of all mainstream contracts have seat belts fitted.

2.2 Currently 9074 pupils are transported on dedicated schools contracts, 3896 primary pupils and 5178 secondary pupils. A total of 277 contracts operate at a current annual cost of £3,488,233.

2.3 The additional cost to make the provision of seat belts mandatory on all North Lanarkshire mainstream contracts would be £96,680 per annum.

3. Transport of ASN Pupils

3.1 Transport to school is currently arranged for 1331 pupils with additional support needs (ASN). The types of contract are detailed below.

Internal Transport buses	368
Licensed Taxis/Private Hire Vehicles	842
Parental Expenses	7
Private Hire & Reward Contractors	114

- 3.2 Transport is arranged by the department and the conditions of contract stipulate that all vehicles used in the conveyance of pupils must be fitted with seat belts.
- 3.3 The internal transport vehicles are either fitted with child adjustable seat belts, booster seats or specialist car seats to suit pupil's individual needs.
- 3.4 All the licensed Taxis provided by Private Hire 142 contractors are fitted with seat belts. New seat belt legislation allows these vehicles exemption from having to provide booster seats for children.

3.5 Parental Expenses

Pupils transported to schools by their parents are all in vehicles fitted with seat belts. These vehicle are covered by the new seat belt legislation and the provision of booster seats is required, where necessary.

3.6 Private Hire & Reward

The 41 private hire & reward contractors all use vehicles fitted with seat belts. These vehicles are covered by the new seat belt legislation and the provision of booster seats is required where necessary.

4. New Legislation – Seatbelts/Child Restraints

- 4.1 On 18 September 2006 changes to the regulations covering seat belts and Child restraints on taxis minibuses and coaches come into effect.
- 4.2 Feedback from other authorities identifying the following response to the legislation.

North Ayrshire) Perth) Falkirk)	All licensed taxis and private hire contractors are required to use child restraints even though they are exempt.
Perth & Kinross	200 child restraints at a cost of £13 each have been provided by the authority for use on school contracts
All other Authorities	Working to the legal minimum requirement.

- 4.3 At this time all transport used in the conveyance of pupils with additional support needs are fitted with seatbelts and where required restraints/booster seats or specialised seating.

While almost 50% of mainstream transport is provided with seat belts the actual percentage will be higher as contractors introduce new buses into their fleet. Tenders for the provision of transport with seat belts are becoming comparable with tenders for the provision of transport without seat belts. The council is currently operating within the parameters of existing legislation.

5. Recommendations

The Education Committee is recommended to:-

- i) note the position with regard to seat belt provision on school transport including recent amendments to seat belt legislation.
- ii) note the cost implication of changing the conditions of contract to make the provision of seat belts mandatory.