



**Executive
15 March 2010**

**Report from the Director of
Policy and Regeneration**

Wards affected:
ALL

Pupil safety on the journey to and from school

Forward Plan Ref: PRU-09/10-19

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the findings and recommendations of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny task group investigation into how to improve pupil safety as they travel to and from school. This work will contribute to the administration's priority to improve services for youth in the borough.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Executive are asked to note the recommendations and the service department response.
- 2.2 That members of the task group be thanked for their work.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 On the 12 February 2008 the Children and Families Overview Committee agreed to set up a task group to consider concerns amongst young people about their personal safety on the journey to and from school. The task group began its work in October 2008 and met on five occasions. It included the following members:

Councillor Mary Arnold
Councillor Kanta Mistry (Chair)
Councillor C J Patel

The aims of the task group were to:

- Review existing partnerships in place to tackle safety on the journey to and from school
- Look at ways to support and encourage schools to implement initiatives to improve safety on the journey to and from school
- Look at good practice from other local authorities on ways to improve safety on the journey to and from school for pupils

Findings of the Task Group

- 3.2 This review is borne out of concerns among a significant number of young people about personal safety as they travel on public transport to and from school. A wealth of data from surveys and crime statistics highlight that robberies, bullying and anti-social behaviour are prevalent at the end of the school day in areas where young people congregate.
- 3.3 The task group found that there has been some attempt to tackle this issue. In 2006, the council, as part of a neighbourhood working initiative ran a project with a secondary school in Dollis Hill where dedicated youth workers were employed to travel with pupils on school buses. As part of the scheme a monthly courtesy ward was presented to pupils rewarding good behaviour. Overall this project was found to significantly reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. The safety in and around schools working group has recently secured funding from Transport for London to run a pilot school escort project across schools in Brent. However there are concerns about the long term sustainability of this type of work.
- 3.4 Brent has a well established Safer Schools Partnership. Police officers run a number of projects to promote safer school journeys including providing property marking and running a 'keep your stuff safe' lesson during personal, health and social education (PHSE) at the school. Transport for London has developed a number of initiatives to promote good behaviour on buses amongst pupils. However all this work needs to be promoted to secure greater participation in Brent schools.
- 3.5 A number of witnesses highlighted that overcrowding on the 245 bus perpetuates problems around school safety. This bus route stops outside a number of schools and often becomes overcrowded at the end of the school day, which can lead to bullying and anti-social behaviour amongst young people.
- 3.6 Immense pressure on school curriculums means that there is difficulty in encouraging schools to prioritise this issue. The task group have identified way that this work can be embedded into existing agendas through including behaviour on the school journey in home-school agreements.
- 3.7 Stereotyping of young people in the mass media contributes to negative perceptions of young people and is causing a gulf between older and younger generations.

4.0 After considering all the evidence the task group developed the following recommendations:

Recommendation One

That the membership of the Safety and Security in and around Schools working group is reviewed to ensure that all relevant partners are represented

Recommendation Two

That the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee review current activity to engage persistent young offenders in the borough.

Recommendation Three

That the council develop intergenerational projects to build a greater understanding and mutual respect between young and older people.

Recommendation Four

That a web resource is developed by the Children and Families Department for schools which provides information on resources available to tackle bullying in the community, which should also include Brent's anti-bullying guidance on the home to school journey and the work of the Safer Schools Partnerships.

Recommendation Five

That primary schools are encouraged to participate in Transport for London citizenship programmes

Recommendation Six

That Safer Schools Officers help schools to develop a travel plan incorporating crime and safety issues

Recommendation Seven

That recognising achievement should be part of all school escort projects, as a way of encouraging school pupils to act responsibly.

Recommendation Eight

That Transport for London increase the 245 bus service at peak times

Recommendation Nine

That the Children and Families Department spread good practice on the provisions within the Education Act to promote safety outside of schools

Recommendation Ten

That the Children and Families Department encourage schools to include the journey to and from school in their home-school agreements.

5.0 Service Department Response

Recommendation	Service Response	Officer Responsible
<p>1. That the membership of the Safety and Security in and around Schools working group is reviewed to ensure that all relevant partners are represented</p>	<p>The membership of this group will be reviewed.</p>	<p>N Rush and Inspector Mark Hambleton of Brent Police.</p>
<p>2. That the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee review current activity to engage persistent young offenders in the borough.</p>	<p>The children and Families Department has recently began a task group on youth offending and will include services for persistent young offenders in the review</p>	<p>Stella Akintan</p>
<p>3. That the council develop intergenerational projects to build a greater understanding and mutual respect between young and older people.</p>	<p>The council are currently planning a Phase 3 intergenerational children's centre in Kingsbury. The Centre will provide the full core offer including sign posting to early education and childcare, family support and outreach to parents and child and family health services. The children's centre will be co located alongside an existing day centre for the elderly and joint planning is currently underway between children's and adult services to ensure intergenerational services are planned and delivered particularly maximising on the skills and knowledge of the recently retired group of older people. The learning from the Kingsbury model will be used to develop intergenerational forums in each of the 5 Brent localities.</p>	<p>K Pau</p>
<p>4. That a web resource is</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on resources to tackle 	<p>A. Felsenstein</p>

<p>developed by the Children and Families Department for schools which provides information on resources available to tackle bullying in the community, which should also include Brent's anti-bullying guidance on the home to school journey and the work of the Safer Schools Partnerships</p>	<p>bullying in the community and anti-bullying guidance to be put on Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with E-Safety Officer to ensure that there is information for parents, practitioners and the community on the website 	
<p>5. That primary schools are encouraged to participate in Transport for London citizenship programmes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LA to register with Transport for London Citizenship programme, highlight its strengths and then encourage primary schools to participate 	<p>A. Felsenstein</p>
<p>6. That Safer Schools Officers help schools to develop a travel plan incorporating crime and safety issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed in principle. Safer School Officers should liaise with Deborah Bonner, senior travel plan officer in Environment & Culture 	<p>R. Boxer</p>
<p>7. That recognising achievement should be part of all school escort projects, as a way of encouraging school pupils to act responsibly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed that this should be incorporated into all projects. 	<p>R. Boxer</p>
<p>8. That Transport for London increase the 245 bus service at peak times</p>	<p>Transport for London has stated the following; "In relation to the action on increasing the capacity of Route 245, at the beginning of this term we introduced an additional journey to route 245 in the morning peak towards Golders Green. Data suggests that this has resolved the capacity issue and TfL has not received complaints about the route this academic year" These findings will also be reviewed by the Public Transport Liaison Committee</p>	<p>Jim Lawman</p>

9. That the Children and Families Department spread good practice on the provisions within the Education Act to promote safety outside of schools	The key provisions of the Education and Inspections Act, 2006 in relation to promoting safety outside of schools to be highlighted to schools through letter to headteachers and reminder on the schools extranet	A. Felsenstein
10. That the Children and Families Department encourage schools to include the journey to and from school in their home-school agreements.	Schools to be encouraged through letter to headteachers, information to be put on the schools extranet and network meetings of senior and middle school leaders	A. Felsenstein

6.0 Legal Implications

- 6.1 Section 89 Education and Inspections Act 2006 defines the responsibilities of the head teacher for establishing and maintaining a behaviour policy for the school that promotes self-discipline, respect for others and proper regard for authority.
- 6.2 *S 89 (5) Education and Inspections Act 2006* enables the head teacher to determine (to such an extent as is reasonable) measures to regulate the behaviour of pupils when they are not on school premises or under the control or charge of a member of the school staff. This would, for example, allow rules governing behaviour on the journey to and from school and during work experience placements.
- 6.3 The Local Authority has a duty for making arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children by virtue of s11 Children Act 2004.
- 6.4 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 promotes the practice of partnership working to reduce crime and disorder and places a statutory duty on police and local authorities to develop and implement a strategy to tackle problems in their area. In doing so, the responsible authorities are required to work in partnership with a range of other local public, private, community and voluntary groups and with the community itself.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 The cost of implementing the recommendations within the task group report can be met from existing budgets, where these relate directly to the council.

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