

# AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

19<sup>th</sup> April 2010

## UPDATE – INTRODUCTION OF CRB CHECKS FOR SOCIAL TRANSPORT CONTRACTS

Report of the Head of Consortium

STRATEGIC AIM:	To be a well managed organisation
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### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 At its meeting in January 2010, the Committee requested an update on the progress in introducing CRB checks for drivers and escorts delivering the Social Transport Service.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee note the report

### 3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Consortium issued a report in November 2008 on an audit of the Social Transport Service. The audit identified that the service made use of private contractors to provide drivers and, in some cases, escorts. At the date of the audit, it was not Council policy to obtain CRB disclosures from contractors: the Transport Group Manager was instead placing reliance on evidence provided by contractors, which was normally received only after a driver or escort had started working for the Council. The audit also established that drivers and escorts were not issued with identity badges, making it a more difficult administrative task to ensure that only proper persons were engaged in service delivery.
- 3.2 The audit report contained two relevant recommendations, that:
- 1 “Transport Group Manager ensures escorts working on behalf of the Council are required to undergo a CRB check to give assurance that the operative has no convictions immediately prior to beginning work with the Council. CRB checks are then undertaken every three years.” and
  - 2 “The Transport Group Manager introduces ID badges for appropriately CRB checked Special Educational Needs (SEN) escorts and bus drivers who are working on behalf of the Council.”
- 3.3 Both recommendations were accepted with the caveat that the resource implications would be significant and that the formal agreement of the Head of HR would be required. Subsequently, the developing National Safeguarding Agenda, and particularly the imminent establishment of the Independent Safeguarding Authority prompted consideration of possible alternative means of obtaining necessary

assurance. It was also determined that a requirement for CRB checks – to be funded by the contractors – would require a revision of the Service’s standard form of contract. Implementation of the two recommendations remained on hold with a view to developing arrangements fully compliant with any standards that the ISA might introduce.

#### 4 CURRENT POSITION

4.1 Following restructuring, ownership of the two recommendations rests with the Head of Highways Management. Following a meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> March, he has now determined that:

- 1) A letter is to be sent to all current contractors advising that the standard form of contract is to be revised with the effect of placing an obligation on the contractor to bear the cost of CRB checks on all drivers and escorts serving the Council. The letter will specify that the new contract condition will have effect from date of the next renewal of a contract. Since current contracts run for three to five years with rolling commencement dates, CRB checks will not be in place for all contractors before 2015.
- 2) As indicated in the letter, new contract terms will be in place for the Council’s service providers from June 2010 onwards. During 2010/11, new contracts should cover about 20% of the Service.
- 3) Arrangements are in place to provide identity badges for all drivers and escorts working for the Council. As an interim measure, badges will be issued to drivers and escorts for whom evidence of CRB checks is provided by their employers: the managers of the establishments served will be advised to report any instances where a contractor provides a driver or escort not holding an identity badge.

#### 5 RISK MANAGEMENT

RISK	IMPACT	COMMENTS
Time	Low	No time critical issues arise from this report
Viability	Low	There are no issues arising from this report
Finance	Low	No financial issues arise from this report
Profile	Low	Safeguarding is a matter of general public interest
Equality and Diversity	Low	There are no specific equality and diversity issues arising from this report.

Background Papers  
None

Report Author  
Richard Gaughran

Tel No: (01572) 722577  
e-mail: enquiries@rutland.gov.uk

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