



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**19.3.09**

### **YELLOW SCHOOL BUS SCHEME WOULD CREATE 13,000 JOBS**

New research shows that introducing yellow school buses in Britain would create up to 13,000 new jobs across the country. Around 10,000 of these would be for drivers with the rest covering engineers, managers and manufacturing.

The research, released in advance of the Transport Select Committee's report into home-to-school transport to be issued on Sunday, was commissioned by the Yellow School Bus Commission and carried out by the University of Aberdeen's Centre for Transport Research.

The Commission's Chairman, former Education Secretary Rt Hon David Blunkett MP, called on the Government to follow the recommendations of the Commission's report, published last September.

Mr Blunkett said: "We argued in our report that the Government should introduce dedicated home-to-school transport, primarily because these buses provide the safest and most secure method of carrying our children to and from school.

"Two developments in the few months since we published our report make the case more compelling. This week's unemployment figures show the need for Government to look for opportunities to create a range of new jobs; and the research we've published today shows that the Commission's recommendations would create up to an additional 13,000, in a variety of roles, right across the UK.

"Last week's revelations on the extent of climate change have also reinforced the need for us to find ways of reducing our impact on the environment. A phased introduction of school buses would take up to 180 million unnecessary car journeys off our roads and deliver a reduction of 55,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions a year.

"The evidence we found in the US - the home of the yellow school bus - and the experience of the pilot schemes in the UK shows the great benefits these services would bring and the vital contribution they could make to combating the twin challenges of the recession and climate change."

Copies of the report are available on request or from the Commission website at [www.ysbcommission.com](http://www.ysbcommission.com).

## Notes to Editors:

**1. The Yellow School Bus Commission** includes representatives of the main political parties and experts in education and transport:

**Rt. Hon. David Blunkett MP (Chair):** Labour Member of Parliament for Sheffield Brightside. Former Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Former Home Secretary and former Secretary of State for Education and Employment.

**Baroness Ros Scott:** President of the Liberal Democrats and has been a front bench spokesperson for the Department of Communities and Local Government. She was Chair of the Local Government Association's Transport Committee and a former member of the Commission for Integrated Transport.

**Councillor Lt Col Tex Pemberton OBE:** Until very recently, Conservative Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport with West Sussex County Council.

**Garth Goddard:** recently retired Programme Director for the North West Centre for Excellence national transport efficiency project, for 8 years Head of Cheshire County Council's Transport Coordination Service and former advisor to the Shires' Public Transport Consortium.

**John Burch:** Deputy Director of Operations at the Confederation of Passenger Transport UK (CPT) representing the bus and coach industry. He sits on the CPT School Transport Committee and the Department for Transport's School Transport Experts Panel.

During its year long review of school transport it discovered that the number of children travelling to school by car has doubled in the last 20 years – 41% of primary and 21% of secondary school pupils are now being taken on the 'school run'. This represents around one in five of car trips in the morning peak and on some roads journey times can double. The Commission reports that a national roll out of yellow school buses (YSBs) would:

- offer children and parents a safe and attractive option for commuting to and from school;
- reduce local traffic congestion;
- benefit the environment;
- improve safety and wellbeing; and
- improve attendance and timeliness

The Commission recommends that:

- all schools should continue to promote walking and cycling for pupils living within one mile from primary school and two miles from secondary school.
- dedicated school buses should be provided for **primary school** children living over one mile from school.
- **secondary school** pupils should be encouraged to use scheduled bus services but dedicated school buses should be provided for distances greater than two miles to secondary schools where there is:

- limited provision of scheduled bus services, or
- serious behaviour problems with pupils on the public bus network, or
- the potential to link with primary school YSBs

As well as providing safe and secure transport for children these new proposals would remove up to 180 million unnecessary car journeys per year.

The report estimates that providing school buses to primary schools would lead to financial benefits of £530m a year mainly to parents and road users, with parents alone saving £92 million a year on fuel and other vehicle costs. There would also be a net reduction of over 55,000 tonnes of carbon emissions per annum.

The report envisages funding of up to £10,000 per school for dedicated buses delivered through School Travel Plans, as an incentive for schools to stagger hours and work together to maximise the use of the new vehicles. Parents would pay a fare of between £1 and £2 per day except for those entitled to free school meals and/or currently entitled to free school transport. The scheme would require a phased introduction and the additional annual cost of such services would be £154m.

The more flexible approach for secondary schools would take up to 50 million more cars off the roads, would cost between £50m-£100m and is estimated to produce benefits of between £93.5m-£204m per annum.

## **2. Research & Analysis**

During its year long review of school transport the Commission discovered that:

- around 41% of primary pupils get to school by car. Twenty years ago this figure was only 22%.
- 21% of all secondary school pupils are driven to school, more than twice the proportion driven 20 years ago.
- in the morning the 'school run' generates approximately one in five of car trips and on some major roads journey times can more than double.
- the school run contributes around one million extra cars on the road at peak times and a further 1.2 million cars driving extra distances for school drop-offs
- cars on the school run emit about 1 million tonnes of CO2 each year.

The Commission looked at a number of dedicated school bus initiatives in Britain as well as the school bus services in North America, where over 55% of children travel to and from school in the famous yellow vehicles. The Commission has met and talked with schools, parents, operators, transport authorities, other interested parties and, most importantly, many school bus users.

There is strong evidence that yellow school bus services will be popular and effective in Britain. Independent research by raisingkids.co.uk of around 1500 parents showed that 86% would be willing to send their children to and from school on a dedicated school bus. The pilot programmes already running in Britain have had dramatic results in tackling modal shift where typically around two thirds of primary school users were previously taken to school by car.

In the Commission’s view, yellow school bus operations in Britain should not just be about buses painted yellow. They represent a standard of quality and safety and generally include the following common features:

- dedicated and vetted drivers fully trained in both bus operation and child supervision
- a guaranteed seat for every pupil with three-point, all-age seat belts
- familiarisation and safety training for pupils
- registers for younger pupils, giving reassurance to parents
- measures to support good behaviour ranging from CCTV to Codes of Conduct
- dedicated single-deck vehicles designed primarily for the carriage of school children and with yellow livery in line with US practice.

The Commission has been supported throughout by the University of Aberdeen’s Centre for Transport Research in evidence and data analysis, cost benefit modelling and review. The team was lead by Professor John Nelson, while evidence review and cost benefit analysis was conducted by Dr Steve Wright.

New research by the Centre shows how the new jobs would be created:

	1 to 5 mile catchment	2 to 5 mile catchment	
	Primary School Nationwide rollout	Secondary school – rollout to 10% of schools	Secondary school – rollout to 40% of schools
Number of buses	7680	822	3287
No of drivers (driver to bus ratio =1.16)	8909	953	3813
YSB drivers new to bus industry (40% based on Metro data)	3564	381	1525
Drivers transferring from existing school contract services which are not replaced (not new jobs)	1157	354	1415
	Remaining drivers transfer jobs from driving jobs within bus industry resulting in the need for replacement drivers on public service routes		
New jobs for service bus drivers to replace those moving to YSB	4188	218	873
Creation of ancillary staff jobs Ancillary staff to driver ratio = 0.175	1559	167	667
<b>Total new jobs</b>	<b>9311 (7752 drivers)</b>	<b>766 (599 drivers)</b>	<b>3065 (2398 drivers)</b>

In addition to these 12,376 jobs around 1,000 more would be created in manufacturing to deliver the 10,000 new vehicles.

### **3. Administrative Support**

The Commission benefited from secretariat and administrative support provided by FirstGroup plc. First does not sit on the Commission. Both the Commissioners and First are committed to ensure that the independence of the Yellow School Bus Commission is assured.

### **4. Yellow School Bus Pilot Programmes in Britain:**

Nationwide there are around 30 dedicated school bus operations that demonstrate the features common to the Yellow School Bus model. They are located in:

- Aberdeen
- Bedfordshire
- Bracknell Forest
- Cardiff
- Carmarthenshire
- Cheshire
- Cornwall
- Durham
- Essex
- Flintshire
- Hampshire
- Greater Manchester
- Medway
- Merseyside
- Monmouthshire
- Newport
- Norfolk
- Northampton
- Paisley
- Staffordshire
- Somerset
- Surrey - Runnymede
- Warwickshire
- West Sussex
- West Yorkshire
- Windsor and Maidenhead
- Wokingham
- Worcestershire

### **5. Copies of the report are available from:**

Commission Secretary  
Yellow School Bus Commission  
c/o FirstGroup plc  
B210  
Macmillan House  
Paddington Station  
London W2 1TY  
Tel: 020 7298 7379  
Facsimile: 020 7706 2645  
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## **6. Media Enquires**

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