
newsRELEASE

22 January 2008

The Yellow School Bus Tour comes to Colchester on Tuesday

A yellow school bus is coming to Colchester on Tuesday 22 January as part of a major UK-wide public consultation exercise giving everyone the opportunity to have their say about the future of home to school transport.

The 'Yellow School Bus Tour' is being run to support the work of the Yellow School Bus Commission, a new organisation spearheaded by the Rt. Hon. David Blunkett MP. The Commission was set up by international transport operator First earlier this year to examine and quantify the potential benefits of yellow school bus-style dedicated home to school transport programmes.

The bus will be in the High Street by the Town Hall on Tuesday 22 January from 10am to 4pm.

Everyone is being encouraged to provide feedback. The comments received from parents, teachers, children and road users will be used to inform the Commission's report that will be published in late Spring 2008. Visitors to the bus will be able to leave their comments online or by completing a simple questionnaire. They will also be able to find out about yellow school bus programmes that are operating in other parts of Britain and talk to experts about the benefits of this type of home to school transport.

Getting children to school safely is an important issue for many parents. The safety of their child together with a growing recognition of the negative effects on the environment of using the private car on the school run is prompting parents to take a new look at the alternatives. The Yellow School Bus Tour will enable people to do exactly this.

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Commenting on the tour, David Blunkett says: "Yellow school buses offer a range of valuable benefits, providing a safe and high quality means of carrying children to and from school, relieving congestion from our increasingly crowded towns and cities and consequently making a real contribution to reducing our impact on the environment and climate change. With such powerful features in their favour we owe it to society to evaluate the best ways of delivering this sort of service and making recommendations on how we provide incentives to schools and local authorities to do so. I urge anyone with an interest in improving the quality of home to school transport to let us have their views, either by coming to the bus or by completing the questionnaire online."

To complete the questionnaire online and to find out more about the work of the Yellow School Bus Commission go to www.ysbcommission.com

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Further information from Stuart Render on 07760 172773.

Notes to editors:

The Yellow School Bus Commission was set up last summer (2007) following independent research of around 1,500 parents carried out by raisingkids.co.uk. This produced the following key findings:

- 38.7% of primary school children get to school by car - almost four times more than their parents' generation
- 21% of secondary school children get to school by car - over three times their parents' generation
- 86% of parents would be willing to send their children to school on a dedicated school bus
- 51% see the main advantage of such a service as being the environmental benefits of reducing the school run, with 34% placing more importance on peace of mind knowing children are safe
- 60.8% of parents think such services should be funded through a mixture of parental contribution, local and national Government spending

The full membership of the YSB Commission is:

Rt. Hon. David Blunkett MP (Chairman) - Former Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Former Home Secretary and Former Secretary of State for Education and Employment.

Lt. Col Tex Pemberton OBE - Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport with West Sussex County Council.

Baroness Ros Scott - Liberal Democrat front bench spokesperson for the department of Local Government and Communities and former member of the Commission for Integrated Transport.

John Burch - deputy director of operations at the Confederation of Passenger Transport UK (CPT).

Garth Goddard - former Programme Director for the North West Centre for Excellence national transport efficiency project, Head of Cheshire County Council's Transport Coordination Service.

Patrick Harvie MSP - Green Party representative for the Glasgow Region since 2003 and Convener of the Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee of the Scottish Parliament.

The six members of the Commission are visiting yellow school bus initiatives across the UK, talking with teachers, students, parents, local authority transport officers and others with an interest in home to school transport.