

## Transport Services Team



## Policy and Guidelines on the safe operation of minibuses

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Please note:

This is a formal and very detailed document intended for the use of Members, Directors and Senior Managers

A more concise 'quick reference' in the form of a driver's guide accompanies this Policy & Procedure which is written to provide a much easier read document for transport commissioners, Managers, drivers & passenger assistants

\*\*\*note to group, I will index the document when final changes are made\*\*\*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The responsibility placed upon us when conveying passengers in a minibus is very great, we become responsible for other peoples lives. They are deserving of our best efforts to ensure that their journey, whether of a hundred miles or just across town, is as safe as possible. The guidance given in the following pages is intended to assist all those with such a responsibility to make the right judgements. It cannot replace good judgement, but does provide some rules to follow and a framework, which encourages good practice and helps the sensible exercise of responsibility.

If you have any doubts about good practice contained in this document you should consult your Manager in the first instance or alternatively contact the Council's Senior Transport Services Officer (Risk Management). Each Directorate remains responsible for ensuring compliance with the Council's minibus safety procedures and practice. These will be monitored and enforced by the Council's Senior Transport Services Officer (Risk Management). However, the contents of these guidelines represent a minimum corporate standard to be applied in the operation of minibuses.

Please take whatever measures you can to review your practice in minibus operation, and plan for safety in the short, medium and long term. The investment of time and other resources will be amply repaid through an unblemished safety record.

**These guidelines, whilst written especially for minibuses (9-16 passenger seats), also covers the use of multi purpose vehicles (People Carriers).**

**In addition to these guidelines, all aspects of West Berkshire Council's Work Related Road Policy MUST be adhered to at all times. These guidelines are an appendix to the main WRRS Policy**

## 1. **WHAT IS A MINIBUS AND WHO MAY DRIVE ONE?**

### 1.1 Definition

A minibus is defined as a vehicle, which has been constructed or adapted to carry more than 8, but no more than 16 seated passengers in addition to the driver. The gross vehicle weight should not be more than 5000 kg. Although a people carrier is not legally defined as a minibus, these guidelines also include the use of people carriers.

### 1.2 Licensing and Insurance

The legal requirements are that any person who is aged 21 or over, and obtained a car licence prior to 1 January 1997, may drive a minibus as defined above, provided the vehicle is not being operated for hire or reward .

Anyone who passed a car driving test after 1 January 1997 will be licensed to drive category B vehicles only, which will cover vehicles up to 3.5 tonnes with not more than 8 passengers. An additional test and medical report will be required to gain a D1 licence, which covers minibuses. Drivers who passed the test before 1 January 1997 will be automatically granted the right to drive Category D1 vehicles and will not need to take the new test.

West Berkshire Council drivers must also be authorised by their Manager to drive a minibus. To drive a minibus in mainland Europe for hire or reward the driver must have a full PCV category licence.

### 1.3 Competence

The fact that a person conforms with the Council's requirements does not make them safe or competent to drive a minibus. Therefore, **all** minibus drivers must undergo MiDAS (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme) minibus driver training and assessment, organised through the West Berkshire Council, Transport Services Team, prior to their authorisation. Minibus drivers must be retrained & assessed every 4 years, or after any accident deemed their fault.

### 1.4 Standards and Safety

Within the Council there are drivers employed specifically to drive minibuses and others who drive minibuses as an adjunct to their normal duties. In both cases, the same high standards and basic competence are expected as drivers are entrusted with the lives of their passengers. Passengers may be school pupils, Community Care clients, or other West Berkshire Council employees. The first consideration of the driver and the driver's supervisor or manager must be passenger safety.

## 1.5 Guidance for Drivers and Managers

These Guidelines are designed to inform, guide and advise drivers and those responsible for them. Please refer to it regularly. If you have any queries make use of the contact details given. Drivers and managers are responsible for the minibus in law, and should follow guidance provided for them.

By following such guidance, the law will be complied with, passengers will be treated properly, and accidents will be avoided.

**MINIBUSES ARE IN GENERAL A SAFE AND CONVENIENT FORM OF TRANSPORT, WHICH GIVES USERS THE ABILITY TO EXTEND THEIR ACTIVITIES AND AN EXTRA DEGREE OF FREEDOM. USE THEM WITH CARE.**

## 2 **DAY TO DAY MINIBUS OPERATION**

### 2.1 Managers' Responsibilities

There is a responsibility on those who manage drivers of minibuses to ensure that the driver is assessed in their competence to drive, meets current West Berkshire Council Work Related Road Safety (WRRS) Policy, meets appropriate health standards and conforms with insurance requirements. The manager should also check that proper precautions have been taken for the passenger's safety and well being. Managers are responsible in this way for both regular trips on a set route or one off trips and visits, such as excursions, educational visits or holidays. Where trips are of a regular, repetitious nature, the Manager should reassess the arrangements regularly. One off trips must be considered as they arise, taking into account the length and time of the journey, the number of drivers on longer trips, safe driving hours, regular breaks for passenger and driver comfort. If the trip takes place after the usual working day, special attention must be given to the issue of driver fatigue. Also, escorts may be needed on short or long journeys, depending on the type of passenger carried, and Managers are responsible for ensuring they are available when needed. **Managers must ensure driving licences are checked in accordance with West Berkshire Council's WRRS Policy.** Management responsibilities extend to heads of establishments, headteachers and school governing bodies, community groups and voluntary organisations, or any West Berkshire Council employee who authorises a minibus journey. Headteachers' and governors' are advised to refer to the Safety Guidelines for School Visits for further guidance. The Manager must always consider the need to undertake manual handling risk assessments and training for any loading/unloading operations.

### 2.2 Drivers Responsibilities

Drivers are responsible for carrying out safety checks before a minibus is used following current West Berkshire Council 'Nil Defect' system. If they are not competent to carry out these checks, or if the checks give cause for concern about the vehicles safety, they must not take it on the road and should seek guidance from their Manager. Drivers must be satisfied that their passengers are safe in every respect before embarking on a journey. This includes travelling with proper supervision/escorts where they are needed, the proper fitting of seat belts and restraints, wheelchairs secured to proper points, and the operation of ancillary equipment such as passenger lifts, which they must be trained to use, or which trained escorts may operate.

Where longer journeys are undertaken, drivers must ensure that they are not driving too many hours without proper breaks, and that if necessary a relief driver is available. The driver should not be distracted from his/her task, and if the type of passenger carried means this is likely, then an escort should be carried. Smoking is prohibited in any minibus as is the consumption, use, or transportation of drugs (unless medically authorised) or alcohol.

Drivers must notify DVLA Swansea and their Manager about any medical condition or defect that might affect their driving and restrictions applied by DVLA, including courses of prescribed medicine and eyesight. Details of any such condition or defect should be referred to the Council's Senior Transport Services Officer (Risk Management), Personnel, and Occupational Health & Safety. They should immediately inform their Manager if charged with any motoring offence, even if in their own car, motorcycle, or any other vehicle.

### 2.3 Passengers' Responsibilities

Drivers should expect responsible behaviour from passengers. For example, passengers are expected to remain in their seat, wear the seat belt, not cause any disturbance or distract the driver, and follow reasonable instructions from the driver to ensure the safety and comfort of themselves and other passengers. Where passenger's behaviour repeatedly causes problems for drivers and escorts, the driver's Manager must be informed and consideration given to whether the passenger should be conveyed by minibus in the future, or whether special supervision arrangements are needed. Some passengers on West Berkshire Council minibuses, such as young children or people with learning disabilities can only be expected to have a limited understanding of their responsibilities as a passenger. Whilst an escort must be travelling with such passengers, it should be explained to them, so far as possible, what their responsibilities are as a passenger.

### 2.4 Vehicle Log Sheet

A log must be maintained for each minibus giving details of the driver, journey and mileage. This enables Managers to monitor vehicle use, and provide drivers with a clear record of their driving activities. A log entry should be completed for every journey. At times when it is mandatory to use a tachograph (for continental journeys) this should be noted in the log. Minibuses must not be used on the continent unless a tachograph is fitted. For advice and guidance on driving abroad, please contact the Council's Senior Transport Services Officer (Risk Management).

### 2.5 Vehicle Checks and Maintenance

Vehicles must be checked by the first person using the vehicle each day. The check will be in the form of a Vehicle 'Nil-Defect' Check, the form will be signed by the driver to show no defects are found and will be passed to the driver's manager at the end of the day. Vehicle Defect Forms should then be returned to Transport Services Team and in the event of a defect being found the vehicle must not be used until the defect is cleared.

If a moving traffic offence is caused, say, by a brake light bulb being broken it is the driver at the time that has committed the offence. Documentary evidence that a daily check was carried out may save the driver a fine and possible 3 penalty points on their licence.

In order to ensure that vehicles are safely used on the highway it is imperative that they are maintained to the very highest standards. This should be carried out through West Berkshire Council Transport Services Team commercial vehicle repairer. There should be no compromise on servicing. Low quality servicing, maintenance or repairs may compromise safety and cost more in the long run.

Minibuses being operated under Section 19 Permit regulations require additional safety inspections to be carried out, every 4-12 weeks depending upon circumstances. If you have any doubts about service or safety inspection intervals please consult the Council's Senior Transport Services Officer (Risk Management).

Always ensure that the correct class of MOT is obtained. Not all Class IV garages can carry out a Class V test (that prescribed for a minibus). Again, if in doubt, consult the Council's Senior Transport Services Officer (Risk Management).

## 2.6 Minibus Permit

**What is a minibus permit?** – Under the Transport Act 1985 Section 19, VOSA (Vehicle & Operator Standards Agency), through West Berkshire Council Transport Services Team can issue a minibus permit and vehicle disc. This Act must be strictly adhered to, the disc displayed and the vehicle equipped with a fire extinguisher, first aid kit and marked as to comply with the Road Vehicles Construction and Use Regulations 1986. The disc only permits use of the vehicle for purposes related to the Council's responsibilities to the Community of West Berkshire. If the vehicle is being used for other purposes (e.g. by an organisation such as a local Scout Group), and a payment is being made by or on behalf of passengers, the user organisation must supply its own S.19 permit, which can usually be obtained from the organisations parent body or from the VOSA. The West Berkshire Council permit must be removed from the vehicle for the duration of use by such external organisations, and the need for them to obtain their own permit should be specifically drawn to their attention.

The permit allows the vehicle operator to levy a charge to recoup running costs provided there is no profit element in the charge.

A charge is made for the permit, please contact the Council's Senior Transport Services Officer (Risk Management) for further details. Only one minibus can be used at any one time under a single permit, although the permit is not specific to the vehicle but to the "operating body". Where establishments run more than one minibus, they will need an extra permit or permits. If an extra vehicle is borrowed or hired it will require a permit.

The permit is always a requirement and the disc must be displayed in the vehicle.

A S.19 permit is needed to achieve exemption from the UK requirement for the driver to hold a PSV licence and the operator to hold a commercial 'Operators' licence.

**It must be stressed that this is an important part of transport legislation. If you are in any doubt at all about the carriage of passengers, charging and whether hire or reward exists, please consult the Council's Senior Transport Services Officer (Risk Management).**

## 2.7 Defect Reporting

Each vehicle must be equipped with a defect reporting book/pad. They must be completed every day the vehicle is in use and could provide the means to ensure that daily checks are being carried out.

A defect report must be completed even if the report shows a nil return. This is called a "NIL Defect Reporting system". Completed reports must be handed to the person responsible for the vehicle, either for filing if a nil report or for onward transmission to the repairer with a copy being retained.

## 2.8 Fire Prevention and First Aid Kit

Each vehicle must be equipped with two (one is the minimum requirement) extinguishers with BS Kite mark, and with an adequate first aid kit. If in doubt about what should be included in the first aid kit, consult the Health & Safety Adviser. The extinguisher must be in plain view for ease of access in an emergency. The minibus must not be used if an extinguisher is not fitted. Additional extinguishers are required if passengers who use wheelchairs are carried.

## 2.9 Vehicle Load and Towing

### Passengers

No vehicle must carry more than one passenger per seat, irrespective of the age of the passengers. The stated passenger capacity of the vehicle must not be exceeded, and standing passengers are not permitted. Passenger seats must be forward facing with an appropriate seat belt.

### Luggage

There are many recorded cases of passengers being injured by unsecured luggage in the event of sudden braking, an emergency stop or an accident. All luggage and authorised equipment must therefore be stored safely and securely with particular attention paid to heavy items such as jacks and tools. Care must also be taken to ensure that luggage does not block the vehicle gangways, hindering emergency evacuation. If luggage or equipment is to be carried regularly, the following options should be considered.

- Reduce the seating capacity to create a luggage area within the vehicle with appropriate fixings for securing luggage equipment. It is strongly advised that where seating is removed to facilitate dedicated luggage space, seats from the extreme rear of the vehicle are removed, as this is a recognised 'crush area' where body shell intrusion is more likely in the event of a rear end accident.
- Fit a roof rack or luggage box, fitted and loaded in accordance with the manufacturer recommendations. A roof load must be evenly distributed, must not exceed the height of the rack and weigh no more than 200 lbs (91 kgs). Fixings should be regularly checked.



## Towing

The use of a trailer is an alternative means of carrying luggage or equipment, but there are restrictions, which must be observed when the vehicle is towing. Unless the vehicle has a separate nearside door to the passenger compartment which is available to all passengers (other than the front door), passengers must not be carried when towing a trailer, since the towing fixtures impede emergency exit through the rear doors. The only exception is for front seat passengers whose exit would not be impeded. Separate speed restrictions also apply when towing a trailer.

## Use of second vehicle for luggage

Where a large amount of luggage is to be carried, it is advisable to run a second vehicle to carry it.

### 2.10 Gross Vehicle Weight

This is normally stated on a plate affixed to the doorstep riser of the vehicle. This figure, which is the maximum permitted load combination for passengers and luggage, must not be exceeded at any time. If in doubt, you may wish to drive to a recognised weighbridge for a test weighing, (West Berkshire Council, Transport Services Team, can advise on the location of suitable weighbridges).

### 2.11 Excise Licence Fee

In certain cases where only disabled passengers are carried (including one escort and one driver as able bodied) it is possible to obtain a zero rated excise licence. Should this method be adopted, at no time must the vehicle be used to carry able bodied passengers (nor is it even legal for the driver to just drive to the shops with the vehicle unloaded).

**Very careful consideration must be given to seeking a nil excise licence. In most circumstances it will not be appropriate and will hinder proper use of the vehicle.**

### 2.12 Seating

Forward facing seats with seat belts are a statutory requirement for all passengers. All passengers must travel in forward facing seats.

### 2.13 Reversing Vehicles

The reversing of vehicles is an important part of driving a vehicle and is potentially the most hazardous. In order to protect the driver from unnecessary accidents and for the protection of any person in the vicinity of the vehicle the following procedures must be adopted:-

- Ensure that the vehicle is fitted with reversing beepers.
- When reversing, ensure that the Passenger Assistant or a member of staff stands outside the vehicle at the rear and in view of the driver.

- The driver should wind down his/her window in order to be able to hear the person outside the vehicle.
- It is good practice to issue the Passenger Assistant or member of staff with a whistle in order to alert the driver of any apparent danger.

#### 2.14 Speed Limits

Minibus over 3 tons (3050 kg) unladen weight, not towing trailers, and capable of carrying 9 or more passengers:

-	Motorway	62 mph
-	Unrestricted dual carriageway	60 mph *
-	Unrestricted single carriageway	50 mph *

\* **Provided that lower limits are not in force**

#### 2.15 Conveying Passengers who use Wheelchairs

- (a) All persons required to assist in the transportation of wheelchair passengers **must** be trained in the safe operation relating to the carriage of wheelchair users. This training is available from the Transport Services Team.
- (b) It is important that only staff who are competent assist wheelchair passengers, whilst boarding, travelling in, or alighting from a vehicle. Drivers should ensure that all wheelchair movement is carried out by themselves, or their Passenger Assistant. This is the only way to be sure of passenger safety. All staff working on a wheelchair minibus must be trained - accessible MiDAS (drivers), Safe Transportation of Wheelchairs (Passenger Assistants)
- (c) Drivers must ensure that there is sufficient space to locate wheelchairs in the minibus. For full size wheelchairs, a minimum space of 1300mm long by 700mm wide is required. Legislation (VSE 87/1) and Best Practice (MDA 2001 / 2003 / 2005) **must** be followed at all times
- (d) Wheelchairs must not block exits, as this would contravene the safety regulations laid down in the Minibus Regulations.
- (e) Wheelchairs must not be located in such a way as to block any gangway.
- (f) All wheelchairs must have their tyres fully inflated, their brakes applied and be securely anchored to floor tracking, preferably by means of 4-point webbing restraints, or by Quatro restraints. In addition, a means of securing the wheelchair occupant in the vehicle must be used by using two or three point harnesses on the floor tracking. Electric wheelchairs must only be anchored by the use of 4-point webbing restraints. (Metal Clamps **must not** be used for **any** wheelchair). Please consult Senior Transport Services Officer (Risk Management) regarding the appropriate system to be used for securing different types of wheelchairs.
- (g) Passengers must be secured in wheelchairs, preferably by means of a lap and diagonal seat belt attached to the floor tracking. As appropriate to the passenger, an inertia reel full harness or static harness may be used.

- (h) If in doubt how to secure a wheelchair bound passenger, consult the Council's Senior Transport Services Officer (Risk Management). **DO NOT TAKE RISKS** – it is the driver's responsibility to ensure the safety and security of passengers.
- (i) Similarly, if a passenger in a wheelchair refuses to wear a seat belt and/or have the wheelchair secured appropriately to the vehicle, consult your Manager/Supervisor or the Council's Senior Transport Services Officer (Risk Management). **Wheelchair passengers must not be transported without the appropriate restraint of both the wheelchair and the occupant.**

#### 2.16 The Safe Use of Passenger Lifts

- (a) All persons required to operate passenger lifts **must** be trained in manual handling and in the safe operations of passenger lifts.
- (b) The engine must be switched off when the passenger lift is being operated,
- (c) Wheelchairs placed on the passenger lift must have their brakes applied and must be facing into the vehicle.
- (d) Care should be taken to ensure that clients do not have their feet at the edge of the platform where it meets with the floor of the vehicle.
- (e) When the platform is returned to the "Parked" position make absolutely sure that it is secure.
- (f) Electric wheelchairs must have engaged neutral and should be wheeled manually on to the lift platform and whilst being maneuvered within the minibus.
- (g) The lift platform must have the safety stop raised.
- (h) This equipment can be dangerous if not operated correctly and must only be used by staff who have been given proper instruction.
- (i) The carriage of electrically powered mobility scooters is strictly forbidden. Please refer to the Council's Senior Transport Services Officer (Risk Management) for guidance.

**In order that the Council can satisfy themselves that passengers are assisted on and off vehicles safely, and competent persons correctly use associated equipment, it is an essential requirement that all staff using accessible minibuses undertake the Council's "Safe Transportation of Wheelchairs" training course. This course covers passenger assistance techniques, disability awareness, the use of passenger lifts, and the safe transportation of passengers. Additionally, drivers need to have undertaken the wheelchair accessible version of the MiDAS course**

## 2.17 Insurance Cover

Insurance cover may be obtained for any minibus operated by a Council establishment either through the West Berkshire Council scheme or from other commercial insurance companies. Details of cost of the West Berkshire Council's scheme may be obtained on application. The Council reserves the right to refuse insurance on any vehicle it deems unsuitable or unroadworthy. DO NOT assume that a vehicle is insured through the Council's policy unless you have made specific arrangements through West Berkshire Transport Services Team or the Insurance Section.

- (a) **What Insurance cover do I have?** – If the vehicle is insured as part of the Council's Insurance Section then vehicles are comprehensively covered.
- (b) **Does the insurance cover minibuses hired in, or not owned, by the school or establishment?** – No. However, vehicles hired from the West Berkshire Council Transport Services Team are fully insured and costs are included within any hire charge. Vehicles borrowed from other Council establishments **may** be covered by insurance, but you must check.
- (c) Other Insurance Arrangements

Where schools or other establishments have made their own minibus insurance arrangements it is strongly recommended that fully comprehensive insurance is purchased. The use of the vehicle by other organisations (youth organisations, charities etc.) might not be permitted under other policies, and there may be other restrictions on vehicle use. If the vehicle is to be used abroad you are advised to check whether this will involve extra costs or any restrictive terms before purchasing the policy. Whilst excesses and exclusions from the policy may save you money in the short term, consider how they could prove more costly in the event of an accident, and whether the immediate saving warrants the risk.

## 3 **DRIVERS, ESCORTS AND PASSENGERS**

### 3.1 Driver Assessment and Training

Driver Training for minibus drivers, in the form of MiDAS (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme) is Council policy. The training reduces risk for West Berkshire Council, enhances driver abilities, driver (and Manager) confidence, and provide an extra degree of assurance and safety for passengers. A minibus driver who has had training to drive such a vehicle will be a safer driver with a better understanding of the particular driving characteristics of a minibus as distinct from the car they are used to driving. The training of minibus drivers by qualified MiDAS instructors with minibus experience will highlight any driving faults, bad habits or potentially dangerous practices. In order to ensure the highest standards of safety for drivers and passengers, those driving minibuses & people carriers on Council business, **must** undertake training and assessment. Managers should monitor the performance and safety record of all who drive minibuses, whether it is their main task or an "extra". If there is any doubt about a driver's competence, regardless of the type of licence they hold and their previous record, steps

must be taken to investigate. Information concerning driver's accident records whilst working for the Council is held by the Insurance team at West Berkshire Council. Training for non-driving staff is also available and 'Safe Transportation of Wheelchairs' is essential for Passenger Assistants working on wheelchair accessible minibuses

### 3.2 The Availability of Assessment and Training

Advice and arrangements for minibus driver & passenger assistant training should be made by contacting:

West Berkshire Council  
Senior Transport Services Officer (Risk Management)  
Faraday Rd Council Offices  
Newbury  
RG14 2AF  
01635-519106

Advice can also be given on legislation and the law, conveyance of wheelchairs, passenger lift operation and emergency evacuation procedures. If you are in any doubt about any aspect of operating or driving a minibus, please contact the Council's Senior Transport Services Officer (Risk Management).

There is a charge for the training, which is conducted on-road & in a classroom by a qualified minibus instructor. Training and assessment can be designed to meet the particular needs of individuals and establishments. Please contact West Berkshire Council Transport Services Team for details.

### 3.3 Driving Abroad

There are extra considerations involved in driving a minibus on the continent. West Berkshire Council Transport Services Team must be contacted and given details of any such journeys.

### 3.4 Tachograph Training

The use of a tachograph is a legal requirement for continental driving. West Berkshire Transport Services Team should be contacted to discuss the fitting and use of a tachograph. West Berkshire Transport Services Team can offer training in tachograph operation.

### 3.5 Authorised Minibus Drivers Records

All Council establishments must maintain a record of all staff who have undertaken minibus driver training and assessment. The need for such drivers should be regularly reviewed and if extra drivers are needed through increased minibus use or staff turnover, arrangements should be made through Transport Services Team for their training. Drivers who are not on the establishment's qualified driver list (or that of another establishment) **must not** be allowed to drive a minibus.

### 3.6 Health Requirements of Minibus Drivers

All staff to be authorised as minibus drivers must have completed a health questionnaire, undertake an eyesight test and meet all statutory requirements relating thereto, both on their initial training and on subsequent training. All employees who drive minibuses must inform their Manager about any medical condition, temporary or permanent, which may

affect their performance as a driver, so that the Occupational Health Service can be consulted for advice as to their continued capability to drive.

The types of medical condition for which DVLA (Swansea) may impose restrictions include neurological disorders like epilepsy, Parkinson's Disease, brain surgery, cardiovascular disorders like angina, heart attack, pacemaker insertion, diabetes, insulin dependant, or diet/tablet controlled, psychiatric disorders like psychosis or severe mental handicap, alcohol misuse and dependency, drug misuse and dependency, visual disorders.

In particular, insulin dependent diabetics **must not** drive minibuses.

All applicants, for whatever category of vehicle, **must** be able to read in good daylight a number plate at 20.5 metres (67 feet), and, if glasses or corrective lenses are required to do so, these **must** be worn while driving. In addition, minibus drivers must have:

- a visual acuity of at least 6/9 in the better eye; and
- a visual acuity of at least 6/12 in the worse eye; and
- if these are achieved by correction the uncorrected visual acuity in each eye **must** be less than 3/60.

Drivers **must not** have uncontrolled diplopia (double vision) or an abnormal binocular field of vision.

In certain circumstances, the Council's Senior Transport Services Officer (Risk Management) or Health & Safety Adviser, may require an employee to refrain from driving a minibus until their standard of medical fitness is formally established.

### 3.7 Alcohol/Drugs Policy

Alcohol, illegal drugs and certain prescription drugs plus some over the counter drugs, pain killers, hay fever and cold remedies etc, will affect driver ability, putting their safety and that of their passengers and other road users at risk.

Therefore, everyone driving Council vehicles, or driving on Council business, will adhere to the following:

#### Alcohol

- (a) No alcohol to be consumed during the working day.
- (b) No alcohol to be present in your system when driving. Be careful about alcohol consumed during the previous evening. IF IN DOUBT, DON'T DRIVE. YOU COULD PUT YOURSELF AND OTHERS AT RISK AND LOSE YOUR LICENCE.

#### Drugs

- (a) The possession and use of illegal/controlled drugs is a criminal offence. No one should drive if under the influence of drugs or if drugs remain in the system.
- (b) Certain prescribed and over the counter drugs can affect driver performance. Check with your doctor if you are unsure and obtain clearance to drive in writing.

**Failure to adhere to this policy will result in disciplinary action being taken.**

### 3.8 Supervision of Passengers and the Use of Passenger Assistants (Escorts)

The Council owes a duty of care to all passengers conveyed in the minibuses it operates, whether children, old people, able bodied, those with physical and/or learning difficulties. Passengers in some (or all) of those categories will require a greater than normal level of supervision to ensure that they do not become a danger to themselves or others when travelling in a minibus. It is the responsibility of the manager/supervisor at the planning stage to identify whether the nature of the passenger group requires the presence of an escort in addition to the driver. This judgement must be made for all journeys, short or long, regular or one off. Managers must take the following points into account when assessing the need for a Passenger Assistant: -

- Will passengers require assistance in boarding or alighting ?
- Is there the possibility of them vacating their seat or releasing their restraint during the journey?
- Are any of the passengers likely to upset or annoy others?
- Are any passengers likely to require assistance with health problems or medication?
- Are any of the passengers prone to over emotional, bizarre or otherwise unpredictable behaviour?

- Do they require someone to collect them from their front door (and return them there)?
- Might the driver be distracted from their task without a Passenger Assistant?
- Is there any reason to believe that an escort is required to ensure passenger comfort and safety?

**As part of a risk assessment, Passenger Assistants (Escorts) must be provided if any of the answers to the above questions are “YES” and if any of the criteria below is met:-**

- (a) Passengers are likely to have a seizure whilst travelling in the minibus.
- (b) Passengers with mobility problems are travelling on the minibus, either in or out of a wheelchair.
- (c) Passengers who exhibit a degree of challenging behaviour that could be a risk to other travelling on the minibus.
- (d) The minibus is conveying children.

Passenger Assistants should be seated in the main body of the vehicle during transit to provide the best view of all passengers. They must be familiar with passengers who have specific medical needs or challenging behaviour, and must have received appropriate training to respond to passenger’s needs and fulfill their duties. Passenger Assistants can be persons specifically appointed for the purpose or any other suitably trained & competent employee.

### 3.9 Unauthorised Passengers

Only authorised passengers (as determined by the operating Directorate or establishment) should be conveyed on minibuses. If there is any doubt about who may be conveyed, the Council's Senior Transport Services Officer (Risk Management) should be consulted.

### 3.10 Transport of Children in Minibuses

The following guidelines are designed to ensure that no child is placed in a vulnerable situation whilst travelling in minibuses:

- (a) Child seat & seat belt legislation must be followed at all times although it should be noted that the 2007 car seat legislation does not apply to minibuses (9-16 passenger seats). Further advice can be obtained from the Council's Senior Transport Services Officer (Risk Management).
- (b) Any child who refuses to remain in their appropriate child seat/restraint, must travel with an escort, who must ensure that the child remains in the restraint for their own safety. Any further problems must be referred to the appropriate Manager, with an option to refuse transport in future.



- (c) Seat belt adjusters must be used where fitted (e.g. 'Generation' belts).
- (d) Training in the correct use of child safety restraints is available. Please contact West Berkshire Transport Services Team.
- (e) No child under 12 is allowed to travel in the front seats of a minibus.
- (f) All Council staff used to transport children and vulnerable adults', **must** have passed CRB & ISA register checks. Similar checks should be made on drivers who are not Council employees e.g. agency staff, volunteers etc.
- (g) On no account must children share a seat under the old "3 for 2" rule when travelling on a minibus. Each child must sit in their own seat, using the appropriate restraints.

### 3.11 Oxygen

Where a passenger requires access to oxygen, it is permissible for oxygen cylinders to be carried provided they are securely clamped in an upright position, and that any valves or feedlines are closed off and cannot be damaged. A Transport Emergency (TREM) card must be carried on the vehicle at all times to inform the driver, escort and the emergency services and the vehicle must display appropriate signage. Full details are contained in West Berkshire Council's 'Transportation of Oxygen' policy document and further information & advice is available from the Council's Senior Transport Services Officer (Risk Management).

### 3.12 Driving Convictions

Drivers must inform their manager and the Council's Transport Services Manager immediately if charged with any motoring offence, regardless of whether the offence was committed in their own vehicle, a Council vehicle or any other vehicle. Similarly, any previous convictions should be made known to the Manager before a new/prospective minibus driver is allowed to drive a minibus.

**If a driver is convicted, with the licence endorsed and penalty points imposed, the manager must consider whether the nature and severity of the offence pose any risk to minibus passengers. It may be appropriate to reconsider that individual's position, and at the very least arrange for their minibus driving skills to be reassessed. The Council's Senior Transport Services Officer (Risk Management) must be consulted before a decision is made about allowing a convicted driver to continue driving a minibus.**

If, on conviction, a minibus driver is disqualified from driving then clearly they must desist from all driving with immediate effect.

**On disqualification of up to six months duration, drivers will be banned from driving a Council minibus for a period of two years from the end of the disqualification period. They must undergo minibus driver training and assessment before driving a Council minibus again.**

**Where a disqualification is for a period of more than six months, the driver will be banned from driving a Council minibus for a period of five years from the end of the disqualification. They must undergo minibus driver training and assessment before driving a Council minibus again.**

Before a disqualified driver is allowed to drive a minibus again, take care to ensure that there are not restrictions on the category of vehicle they are allowed to drive subsequent to the offence.

The imposition of these bans over and above the disqualification period is not arbitrary, but conforms with the potential pattern of re-offending for serious driving offences. Given the enormous responsibility of conveying passengers in a minibus, the Council's prime concern must be passenger safety. Conviction for a serious driving offence must give cause to doubt an individual's judgement and driving ability. Such doubt can only be dispelled after a reasonable period of time has elapsed in which the driver has demonstrated that they are not likely to re-offend.

**If any driver accumulates 6 or more penalty points on their license they should be immediately referred to the Council's Transport Services Manager. The Council's Transport Services Manager has the right to ask an employee of any Directorate to undertake the Council's driving assessment and any relevant training. Where, in the opinion of Council's Transport Services Manager, there poses a significant risk to allow an employee to continue driving Council vehicles, a Council permit may be revoked. This will be communicated in writing to the employee's line Manager.**

## **4 PLANNING FOR REGULAR JOURNEYS AND SPECIAL TRIPS**

### **4.1 Approval**

Approval of minibus use, whether for regular journeys such as those undertaken Community Care, or for "one off" use, such as a school visit, must be given by the appropriate level of management in the Directorate or establishment concerned. This management responsibility must be consciously and consistently exercised as an error in judgement could lead to severe consequences. Where minibuses are used on regular routes, such as the collection of clients, regular reviews of usage should be instituted. Points that managers must consider in approving and reviewing minibus use are shown in the following checklist:

- Is the driver suitably authorised/trained/experienced/qualified/responsible to drive the vehicle.
- Is an escort required?
- Is a safer/cheaper/more appropriate alternative to the minibus available?
- Does the driver conform to Council insurance requirements?
- Is the driver's health sufficiently good to drive a vehicle with passengers? Has the driver's health been checked recently, including eyesight?
- Has the driver's licence been checked & validated recently?
- Is the vehicle in good order, appropriately licensed with the proper class of MOT and is it insured?

- Is the vehicle suitable to carry the type of passenger to be conveyed? e.g. able bodied, people with disabilities, wheelchairs, special restraints, passenger lifts fitted, stretcher facilities etc. ?
- How will luggage/equipment be carried?
- Have driver's hours and rest periods been taken into account?
- Is a tachograph required (continental trips)?
- Will the gross vehicle mass be exceeded?
- Is there a valid minibus permit in the vehicle?
- Is approval required from any other source, e.g. appropriate Manager, school governors, parents, carers?
- It is recommended that prior to approval being given a journey Risk Assessment should be completed.
- For schools, the appropriate 'off-site activity' forms have been approved

#### 4.2 Regular Short Journeys

The shortest safe route should be taken which takes in all necessary stopping points e.g. client's houses. Consideration should be given to short term hazards such as road works which may justify a route change or detour. If possible (and necessary) take note of useful facilities en route such as public toilets, doctor's surgery, public telephones for use in emergency. It would be advisable for the driver to drive the route without passengers first, both to become familiar with it and identify landmarks, facilities and potential hazards and to time the journey.

#### 4.3 Longer Journeys and "One Off" Trips

In planning for longer journeys a preliminary visit and proper route planning are vital. The length of the journey (and thus the need for breaks/second drivers) can be assessed, stopping points with toilets identified for comfort breaks, parking locations found and alternatives listed. Potential problems or dangers can also be identified. For short or long journeys, regular or otherwise, a list of passengers with the name of the driver/escorts should be made and retained off the vehicle, with a copy for the driver. For both short and long journeys sufficient time should be allowed so the driver is not tempted to rush.

#### 4.4 Driver's Hours

Managers and drivers of minibuses should pay close attention to driver's hours and rest periods. EU regulations, although not compulsory for most Council minibuses in the UK, it is strongly recommended that they should be adhered to. The departure time of journeys, particular longer ones is also an important consideration. For example, it may be better to leave early on Saturday morning on a long journey than depart Friday night after a full day's work. **Where journeys are likely to last longer than 2 hours, or the working day including driving time exceeds 8 hours, a second driver MUST be taken to share the work and reduce the risk of driver fatigue.**

#### 4.5 Comfort Breaks

Where journeys of more than 2 hours are undertaken, a comfort break of at least 15 minutes should be planned to allow passengers and driver to use toilets, take refreshments and simply get out of the vehicle for a short term. The venue(s) should be identified when planning the trip. Where passengers have special needs, extra care should be taken in identifying suitable facilities, e.g. a disabled toilet, parking facilities which allow sufficient room for a passenger lift to be used etc. Passengers needs may dictate that a break is necessary on a shorter journey, and this should be considered at the planning stage. Comfort breaks may also be linked with driver's hours (see above).

#### 4.6 Passenger Assistants (Escorts) and Passenger Supervision

As described above, it is a managerial responsibility to ensure that suitability trained Passenger Assistants (Escorts) are provided where necessary, to ensure that passengers needs are met, that drivers are not distracted from their task, and assistance in embarking and disembarking is available. In certain circumstances, the person acting as the Passenger Assistant (Escort) may also be a second driver. The use of Passenger Assistants should be considered in the circumstances as described at 3.8.

#### 4.7 Expect the Unexpected

It is worthwhile to anticipate the worst and plan your procedures for dealing with problems large and small. The risk management approach will help you with this, whether your journey is short or long, regular or a "one off". Some suggested scenarios you may wish to plan are listed below.

- Ensure your mobile phone is fully charged and you have credit.
- What will you do if the driver is unwell? (longer journeys)
- Have you sufficient funds to pay for an alternative means of transport or accommodation in the event of breakdown or driver illness? (longer journeys)
- Do you know where the nearest hospital/medical facilities are located?
- In the event of problems, whom should you contact at home? (longer journeys)
- What if a passenger's medication is lost?
- A passenger cannot be found when it is time to depart.
- The keys of the vehicle are lost.
- A passenger suffers a major asthma attack.
- A passenger suffers an epileptic fit.
- Do you know how to obtain emergency help for the vehicle?
- Do you carry spare vehicle light bulbs and a warning triangle?

#### 4.8 Comfort Kit

The following items may be useful on longer journeys, particularly where children are being conveyed. (In addition to a first aid kit)

- Disinfectant
- Sick bags
- Cloth & towel
- Tissues
- Rug/Thermal wrap
- Plastic gloves and apron
- Container/bottle of fresh water

- Pen and paper
- Torch
- Reflective waistcoat
- Plastic bucket
- Mobile phone
- Spare packed lunch
- Spare clothing

#### 4.9 Trips Outside the UK

Please remember to consult West Berkshire Council Transport Services Team if a minibus is to be taken abroad. In particular you should be aware that any journey involving the use of a vehicle for hire or reward necessitates a driver who has passed a DSA Driving Test to drive passenger-carrying vehicles. The definition of hire or reward is very wide and includes almost any payment by or on behalf of passengers. This would certainly include any use of a Council minibus. Special insurance arrangements must be made, and a tachograph must be fitted for continental driving. Please note that additional vehicle recovery arrangements are also required.

To drive a minibus in mainland Europe for hire or reward, the driver must hold a D1 category licence without the 'not for hire/reward' restriction. If in doubt about the bonafides of any trip contact West Berkshire Council Transport Services Team or the Council's Insurance Section.

For journeys which take place within European Union Member States it is advisable to obtain an Own Amount Certificate (available from the D.O.T. International Road Freight Office, Westgate House, Westgate Road, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne NE1 1TW).

For journeys to non EU countries who are party to the ASOR agreement (Norway, Switzerland and Turkey) a Passenger Waybill and a passenger list must be carried (available from the confederation of Passenger Transport, Sardinia House, 52 Lincoln Inn Fields, London WC2A 2LZ).

Travel to all other countries is covered either by bilateral agreements between the UK and the country in question, or by that country's domestic licensing laws. Advice should be sought from the relevant country's embassy, tourist office or from the Department for Transport.

## 5 **BREAKDOWN AND ACCIDENT**

### GUIDELINES IN THE EVENT OF A BREAKDOWN

#### 5.1 Breakdown on Ordinary Carriageways

- (a) Move the vehicle as far to the left as possible. Switch on the hazard lights.
- (b) If you attempt to find a telephone, do not leave passengers alone in the vehicle. If you are transporting clients that cannot go with you, i.e. due to their physical or behavioural problems, you must be travelling with an escort.

If you break down, follow the contact information with the vehicle

- (c) If someone stops to offer help, stay inside the vehicle with the doors locked. Open the window sufficiently to ask them to go to the nearest telephone and notify the police or rescue service for you. Do not get into the car with a stranger or attempt to hitch a lift.
- (d) If a mechanic or the police arrive and are not in uniform or are in an unmarked vehicle, ask to see some form of identification before getting out of the vehicle.
- (e) Deploy warning triangles or cones if it is safe to do so.

## 5.2 Breakdown on the Motorways

The general procedures are the same as the guidelines for ordinary carriageways. However, extra hazards exist on the motorway.

If the vehicle breaks down on the motorway, or a serious fault develops, put your hazard warning lights on and pull over to the hard shoulder as quickly and as far off the carriageway as possible. If possible angle the front of your vehicle slightly inwards, which helps to indicate you have broken down. Once on the hard shoulder, try to coast to a telephone box. These are one mile apart along all stretches of motorway. Never reverse on the hard shoulder or attempt to cross the central reservation. This is illegal, highly dangerous and pointless, as the telephones on motorways should be in the same position of either side.

Make it clear to the person you are calling whether you are alone or with passengers when making a call for help. If alone stand behind the telephone facing oncoming traffic. You will see anyone approaching and it will be less obvious if you are a woman on your own.

Afterwards, return to the vehicle, lock all doors except for the front passenger door and wait by the side of your vehicle on the embankment behind the crash barrier. All people should wait by the side of the vehicle on the embankment, well away from the roadway and behind the crash barrier. If you are carrying potentially vulnerable passengers, e.g. wheelchair users or elderly people, inform the emergency services immediately.

## 5.3 Guidelines in the Event of an Accident

If you are involved in an accident and you are not injured, see whether anybody is badly injured. If medical attention is required, ensure help is summoned immediately. Do not remove injured people from a vehicle unless they are in danger. Loosen tight clothing, especially around the neck and make sure they are warm. Do not give them anything to eat or drink.

Try to reduce the risk of further collisions if possible by moving the vehicle/s off the road or warning on coming traffic of a hazard. Do not put yourself at risk by standing on the carriageway.

You are legally obliged to stop after a collision with a person, vehicle, dog, livestock or property. Please take all necessary details if other driver involved, i.e. make and registration of the vehicle, name and address of the driver, name of insurers and certificate number if known. You must, if required to do so by a person having reasonable grounds, provide the same information. If, having stopped, the exchange of information is not completed for any reason, the driver should report the accident to the

police as soon as possible. If possible, obtain names and addresses of witnesses, sketch plans or even photographs, may be of value. Do not admit liability. If you are involved in an accident with an unoccupied car, leave a note on the car with your work telephone number. If you are in any doubt as to whether any incident should be reported to the police, please contact the Council's Transport Services Team.

Drivers must not continue to drive a vehicle after an accident resulting in damage to the construction of the vehicle until the vehicle has been inspected. If in doubt, do not drive it.

Immediate inspection is required if the damage is thought to have affected the steering, suspension, brake components, lights or passenger/driver safety. An inspection as soon as is operationally feasible must be arranged for any other damage, no matter how slight the problems may appear. If in doubt, do not drive.

If the vehicle cannot be driven, follow the guidelines – In the event of a breakdown.

All accidents, however minor, must be reported to the appropriate supervisor/manager immediately. An accident report form should be completed as soon as possible, including police incident numbers and police officers' details. Failure to report an accident may prejudice the position of the Council and affect its right to claim under its motor insurance policy. West Berkshire's Transport Team and Insurance Team must be notified and a WebRisk entry must be made.

#### 5.4 Notification of Delays

If as a result of any unforeseen circumstances, such as accident or breakdown, there will be a significant delay before passengers reach their destination, then arrangements must be made to inform those awaiting their arrival. These may be spouses, parents, carers or friends. The driver or escort should contact the manager/supervisor or any pre-arranged emergency number with as much information as possible including the new projected arrival time. It is always advisable to have arranged an emergency contact for any trips taking place outside working hours (see Section 4, Planning Trips).

#### 5.5 Accident, Injury and Illness

It is possible that in the course of a minibus journey that a passenger, escort or driver might become ill, be injured or killed. Plans should be in place to manage these eventualities at establishment and Directorate level. The plans should allow for: -

- Next of kin informed in a caring and sensitive manner.
- Necessary support available to ensure the best interests of the sick or injured.
- Support for next of kin if traumatised.
- Careful handling of media enquiries.
- Involvement of senior staff as required.
- Provision of information for all interested parties. This may require the use of special telephone/fax numbers.

- Provision of support for accident victims/next of kin after the event.
- Debriefing of employees or volunteers involved

## 5.6 First Aid and First Aid Equipment

All drivers and escorts must be trained in emergency first aid as a minimum, although this would not preclude such persons being trained as qualified first aiders if this was deemed appropriate.

The contents of First Aid Boxes are subject to change, and the Health and Safety Adviser should be consulted if there is doubt about what should or should not be included.

## 6 **AVOIDING DANGEROUS SITUATIONS**

### **Individuals at risk when in sole charge of a vehicle.**

The following list of 'dos and don'ts' is intended to assist you, not so much in your role as a driver, but as an individual who may be at risk of assault or theft, particularly when driving a minibus without passengers or a second person.

- Always carry an up to date map and know where you are going before setting off. This avoids the need to ask for directions from strangers.
- Never give lifts to anyone except authorised passengers.
- Beware of other drivers signaling faults on the vehicle to you. This may be a ploy to get you to pull over. Drive on slowly until it is safe to stop and check yourself.
- If you think you are being followed, do not make eye contact. Slow down, lock your door and shut your windows. Drive to a police station or a busy area with lots of people.
- Where possible, travel on main or well-used roads and by day. If you have to make a journey after dark, try to tell someone of the destination and estimated time of arrival.
- Try not to park in poorly lit streets, and always as close to your destination as possible. In a multi-storey car park, find a space close to the exit, near to the ground level and away from pillars. When returning, have your keys ready so that you can get in quickly.
- Never put a bag, handbag or valuable goods on the passenger seat when travelling in town. You could have it snatched at traffic lights.
- Always lock the vehicle before leaving it and when returning, look around the vehicle from a suitable distance to ensure that no one is hiding behind it.
- If you see another driver in difficulty, do not stop. Drive to the nearest telephone and report what you have seen to the police.
- Road rage has become an increasingly common phenomenon in recent years. If another road user acts in an intimidatory fashion, continue the journey as calmly as possible and only pull over if there is a danger of loss of control of the vehicle. If one



has to pull over try to do so only when there are plenty of people around. Mobile phones are a useful ally to road users in such circumstances and the Police should be notified as soon as possible when they occur.

## 7 **MINIBUS CONSTRUCTION AND SPECIFICATION – ACQUIRING NEW OR REPLACEMENT VEHICLES**

When acquiring a vehicle, or a vehicle is due for replacement users should contact West Berkshire Council Transport Services Team for advice and guidance on vehicle specification. There are also a number of issues, which the user must take into account which do not relate to vehicle type or equipment. If you acquire the wrong vehicle for your needs, there may be costs, not just in financial terms, but in compromised safety and long-term inconvenience.

- 7.1 Seat belts must conform to the requirements of the Construction and Use Regulations 1986 and to the usage legislation of 2006. They should be of the lap and diagonal type, and preferably with height adjusters, particularly where children are to be conveyed. (Such as the 'Generation' belt.) Belts should be fitted to proper anchorage points, usually on the vehicle floor or chassis. Where belts are an integral part of special seating you must ensure that the seating is properly anchored (see below). All new and replacement vehicles acquired must have seat belts fitted.
- 7.2 Seating should be anchored to the floor by at least four (maximum 6) 10mm bolts. Where integral belts are fitted to seats stronger mountings will be required. Spacing may need to be varied for passengers who exhibit challenging behaviour. The size of passengers may also influence seat size and spacing. **Sideways facing seating must not be fitted**
- 7.3 Conveying Wheelchairs requires sufficient space to locate them behind fitted passenger seats. Full size wheelchairs require a minimum space of 1300mm long by 700mm wide. They must not be located in the aisle or block exits. Floor tracking should be fitted so wheelchairs can be secured by wheelchair restraint equipment. 'Side of vehicle' tracking should only be used as a means of securing empty, folded wheelchairs or equipment such as walking frames and items should be attached using Unwins 'red straps'. Passengers should be secured to wheelchairs by appropriate passenger restraint equipment such as a fixed harness or a split inertia reel.
- 7.4 WTORS Wheelchair Tie-down & Occupant Restraint Systems. All wheelchairs & wheelchair passengers must be restrained using the appropriate WTORS for their circumstances. This will have been established by a formal wheelchair transportation risk assessment From 2011 WBC will be operating under the National Wheelchair Passport Scheme, an enhanced Risk Assessment to national standards where all wheelchairs being transported will be 'tagged' to show they are safe to be transported and also the correct method & equipment required to do so.

7.5 Passenger Lifts are required if passengers using wheelchairs or other wise incapable of gaining access to the vehicle are carried. Care should be taken over the size of the tail lift, as it may need to accommodate wheelchairs or varying sizes. LOLER 98 legislation demands that passenger lifts are inspected every 6 months and weight tested every 12 months. West Berkshire Council Transport Services Team can advise on the inspection services available.

7.6 Luggage Storage – where luggage is to be carried more than occasionally a dedicated luggage area should be designed in the vehicle with a cage or other means of securing luggage.

7.7 Budget

What is the budget available for the vehicle? Will the money available meet the specification you need, including additional equipment e.g. wheelchair WTORS equipment? If not, are there possible sources of additional funding? Under specification may saddle you with a white elephant. Have you sufficient funding for the lease period or if purchasing then the life of the vehicle.

7.8 Purchase/Lease/Hire

Which is the best option for your needs and cash flow? What is included in the lease/hire package (e.g. maintenance, insurance, upgrades etc)? Can you secure a good discount through cash purchase? Can you obtain a higher specification vehicle through leasing? If purchasing what is the payback period if paying by instalments? If lease or hire, what is the agreement period? Have you checked to ensure you will conform with Council Financial Regulations and standing orders?

7.9 Donated Vehicles

Are the safety and other specification acceptable? Does the vehicle meet your needs? Can you negotiate the specification with the donating organisation or group? Who will own the vehicle? Who is responsible for running costs? Are there any restrictions on use? Have you discussed the vehicle type and specification with the Transport Services Team? Who insures the vehicle? How will the vehicle be disposed of?

7.10 Second Hand Vehicles

What is the expected vehicle life? Has the vehicle been checked by Transport Services Team? Have defects been identified? How much will it cost to correct them? The vehicle may be a bargain, but does it meet your needs and is it safe?

7.11 Future Use

The vehicle may meet your current needs but do you have a changing client group? What will your needs be in 3 years time? Can the vehicle be adapted? Can it accept wheelchair tracking? How do you expect to dispose of the vehicle?

## 8 **USE OF COUNCIL VEHICLES BY VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS**

### 8.1 Insurance Issues

Before any hiring or lending of a minibus ensure the insurance allows for such activity

### 8.2 Drivers

When lending the vehicle to a not-for-profit organisation you must be satisfied that the driver is competent and fit to drive. The drivers should have undergone the minibus driver training provided by West Berkshire Council Transport Services Team. You should always check the driver's licence before handing the vehicle over, and ensure that you know who will be driving at all times.

### 8.3 Information for Borrowers

Provide the borrower with full information about emergency telephone numbers and who to contact in the event of an accident or incident. Borrowers must be aware of all conditions they must fulfill. A vehicle handover checklist is recommended and a period of familiarisation with the vehicle, where you accompany the driver on a 'test' run is advisable. This may also give you some insight as to the driver's competence.

### 8.4 Loaning Vehicles to Other Council Users

Where a minibus is borrowed by another Council establishment, for example a school minibus is loaned to another school, the same procedures and checks should be followed as when the vehicle is loaned to a voluntary organisation.

- (a) The driver should have undertaken the Council's driver training course.
- (b) No changes should be made to the vehicle. For example, seating, seat belts or other internal fixtures must not be removed.
- (c) Drivers should be warned against overloading the vehicle either with extra passengers or luggage.
- (d) Drivers must undertake (in writing) to pay for any loss or damage to the vehicle which occurred whilst they were using it that it is not covered by insurance.
- (e) Permission must be given to fit a roof rack or tow a trailer.
- (f) The vehicle must not be used for hire or reward by the individual, nor should he/she levy any charges on passengers.

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