

GreenMetroCars

Working Together

Councils working together on common functions eg school runs, bus runs, compliance and logistics sounds like a great idea. In principal it is, but is fraught with operational issues including computer software systems, regulation and different stances on potential legal and GDPR issues.

If these can be overcome there can be substantial savings on costs and time.

Combining routes from more than one council that go to the same school, college or Adult Day Centres will potentially save money. This would be most useful and have most impact in the area of combining 2 saloon (4 Seater) routes into one (Minibus) 8 seater route and would be a good place to start. There would be few issues over journey length and number of pickups to complicate matters whether they be from homes or bustops. There would also not have to be new policies made on the number of PA's needed on say a 16 seater journey with passengers with special needs.

At present school run departments are trying to combine different establishments on the same route to save money but timing issues are problematic and having existing children in the vehicle and then trying to load more without leaving the vehicle is challenging at most schools.

Larger vehicles by necessity would need to be bus stop routes and there would need to be set routes devised that passengers can join that cover the area of cooperation to a given school. Different companies could bid on these routes. This needs a lot more organisation and potential changes eg at the beginning of a new school year would make much greater demands on school transport departments at different councils. Also bus routes would grow and contract more frequently and contract times and terms and conditions would have to reflect a more dynamic system.

Streamlining safeguarding, driving tests and medicals into a common set of requirements would also make licensing of pa and drivers much easier for all agencies concerned and satisfy local policy. Cost and time are the enemy of recruiting staff for this. We have situations where gaining the required documentation for a school run escort earning £20 per day is over £400 and taking a month or more. For school run drivers it is a lot more and takes longer although they can earn more money.

Green Metro Cars has written its own software in the form of a company portal. This portal contains every detail about every driver and escort. It also has records of all licenced vehicles. These are updated as often as possible. This is very new and additional staff are being trained to update the portal on a live basis so information is always current. The portal also has insurances and policies



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and procedures ,in house training programs, operators licences and anything else that would be useful to agencies using our service. There are minor issues updating the portal quickly which we are addressing as mentioned. Obviously the data needs to be current at all times for it to have full potency. This will make it much easier for councils to keep track on shared transport at least on our routes.

At present Wokingham, West Berkshire and Bracknell authorities are using/testing this facility. We can tailor the portal to suit different GDPR policies. We will take on board any feedback to improve its functionality.

It would be very easy to write a program that could be shared securely in house between councils where children's details could be shared, linked to google maps where all agencies could be online at the same time if need be to devise routes. In my experience staff in these departments are experienced and well versed in this area and would be happy to use a system that would relieve some pressure on capacity. Also issues can be shared as well as solutions found in a space easily accessible to everyone concerned. Chat boxes and any other type of communication can be incorporated into the program.

Starting with saloon car journeys being combined into 8 seater routes would be the easiest to begin with and get immediate benefits.

There is some pretty far reaching suggestions here but if there is commitment from multiple departments inside and outside of local councils savings can be made without compromising the already high standards that we all aspire to.

As I have mentioned I think the best chance of success if this idea was adopted would be small slow steps that allow for issues to be solved easily and progress made without setbacks,

I hope this helps

Alan



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