

REPORT TO CABINET

Title: **SCHOOL TRAVEL STRATEGY (SUSTAINABLE MODES OF TRAVEL STRATEGY)**

Date: 26 February 2009

Member Reporting: Councillors Mrs Quick and Rayner

Contact Officer(s): Rhidian Jones (Education Officer SEN) 01628 796776 and Gail Kenyon (Group Manager Transport Policy and Implementation) 01628 796157

Wards affected: All

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1.1 This Strategy sets out the Royal Borough's approach to "Sustainable Modes of Travel" for all travel to and from schools within the Borough. It is also a requirement of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which places a duty on local authorities to develop sustainable travel and transport networks and promote their use for home to school travel. The full strategy is available on the Borough website, in Members' Grooms, Group Rooms and from Democratic Services.
- 1.1.2 The strategy is a statement of the Borough's overall vision, objectives and work programme for improving accessibility to schools. The strategy is arranged under a number of key themes including:
- *School Travel Planning*: Highlighting issues affecting travel to school, identifying measures to address them, and promoting sustainable travel behaviour.
 - *Infrastructure*: Providing, improving and maintaining walking and cycling routes to schools, improving access to school sites and providing related on-site facilities.
 - *Road Safety / Independent Travel*: Providing children and young people with the necessary skills to be able to travel safely and independently.
 - *Home to School / Post 16 Travel*: Maximising the benefits offered by home to school transport and recognising where additional investment can improve access to education opportunities that may not otherwise be taken up.
 - *Extended Schools*: Accommodating the changing demands for transport to and from school, and the challenges and opportunities associated with extended services at the start and end of the school day.
 - *14-19 Provision*: Ensuring that the chosen centres of learning are accessible and that transport is not a barrier to take up of these courses.

- 1.1.3 The strategy sets out how the Borough will work towards the Local Area Agreement reward target, NI 198: Children Travelling to School, as well as contributing to other key targets relating to the number of school travel plans, healthy schools, carbon management and casualty reduction.
- 1.1.4 The Council is in a challenging position to meet the National Indicator for Children Travelling to School (NI198) due to the high level of car usage and the level of independent schools in the Borough and the change in travel behaviours necessary to make a real difference. However, the work being carried out with schools currently is proving very positive and small step changes in travel behaviour are starting to develop.

2. RECOMMENDATION: That the Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy be approved.

What will be different for residents as a result of this decision?
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The Borough will ensure that children and young people will have improved access to educational opportunities and have a joined up approach to tackling issues relating to school travel. It will also help to reduce congestion, casualty numbers and other adverse impacts associated with car use on the school run.

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Background

3.1.1 This Strategy sets out the Royal Borough’s approach to “Sustainable Modes of Travel” for all travel to and from schools within the Borough. It is also in response to the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which places a duty on local authorities to develop sustainable travel and transport networks and promote their use for home to school travel. “Sustainable modes of travel” are defined as those that may improve either or both of the following:

- (a) The physical well-being of those who use them;
- (b) The environmental well-being of the whole or a part of their area.

3.1.2 For the purpose of this strategy, sustainable modes are considered to include: walking; cycling; bus / coach; rail; and car sharing.

3.1.3 The duty applies to children and young people of sixth form age and below. It covers not only to those who live in the Borough, but also those travelling in from and out of neighbouring local authority areas to receive education or training.

3.1.4 The Strategy looks at the issues affecting access to and travel between:

- Mainstream primary and secondary schools;
- Denominational schools;
- Special needs education centres;
- Pupil referral units;
- Sixth form and further education colleges;
- Vocational training centres; and
- Independent schools.

3.1.5 The strategy has been prepared within the context of the Borough's Children and Young People Plan 2008-2011 (CYPP) and the Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 (LTP). It also contributes to several reward targets within the RBWM Local Area Agreement, the most directly relevant of which is: NI 198 – Car Use for Journeys to School.

3.1.6 The strategy will help to co-ordinate and link up the various services and activities relating to travel to and from school, including:

- School admissions;
- Home to school transport;
- School Census / independent school travel surveys;
- School Travel Plans / Safer Routes to Schools;
- Road safety education and training programmes;
- Sustainable Schools;
- Learning for Sustainability;
- Healthy Schools.

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

3.2.1 Various transport problems and issues facing the Borough were identified from the assessment of travel needs and the audit of transport networks used for home to school travel. The Council has sought to identify those measures that would be most effective in addressing these problems and that would best meet the needs and aspirations of the local area, working within the limits of available resources. The range of measures considered in this process originated from:

- key stakeholders, including various council service areas, schools, pupils, parents, governors, local residents, Thames Valley Police, transport operators, and other relevant organisations;
- an appraisal of the effectiveness of measures previously delivered;
- output from computer analysis tools such as Accession and GIS; and
- reference to examples of best practice from the UK and overseas.

3.3 Strategy

3.3.1 A number of key themes emerged in developing the strategy. These can be grouped under the following headings. Appendix 2 identifies the work we are currently progressing with towards these themes.

3.3.2 *School Travel Planning:* School travel planning underpins much of the Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy, highlighting issues of concern and identifying tailored mechanisms for addressing these issues and effecting changes in travel behaviour.

3.3.3 *Infrastructure:* Providing, improving and maintaining routes used by pupils and students to travel to and from schools is an integral element of the strategy. Similarly, improving access to school premises and providing adequate on-site facilities are also important.

3.3.4 *Road Safety / Independent Travel:* Providing children and young people with the necessary skills to be able to travel safely and independently.

- 3.3.5 *Home to School / Post 16 Travel:* While the Council needs to ensure that it discharges its statutory responsibilities with respect to home to school transport, there is also a need to capitalise on opportunities to maximise the benefits of this provision and recognise where additional investment can improve accessibility to education opportunities that may not otherwise be taken up.
- 3.3.6 *Extended Schools:* The strategy recognises the changing demands for transport to and from school, and the challenges and opportunities being presented by travel associated with extended services at the start and end of the school day.
- 3.3.7 *14-19 Provision:* Although the Borough has yet to phase in the new diplomas, there is recognition of the need for advanced planning to ensure that the chosen centres of learning are accessible and that transport is not a barrier to take up of these courses.

3.4 Targets and Monitoring

- 3.4.1 Targets are largely those already identified in related strategy documents such as the Local Area Agreement, the Children and Young People Plan and the Local Transport Plan. They relate to:
- NI 198 - children travelling to school
 - Schools with active school travel plans
 - Casualty reduction
- 3.4.2 The Council will monitor changes in circumstances on a monthly basis and any identified threats to the achievement of targets set. This will enable problems to be highlighted at an early stage and corrective or remedial action to be taken where appropriate. Where corrective or remedial action is not achievable, this may trigger an early review of the Strategy. As a minimum, the Strategy will be subjected to an annual review, with results being reported up through LTP Annual Progress Reports and via the relevant ambition groups of the Borough's Community Partnership.

3.5 Funding

- 3.5.1 The Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) has made an allocation of £12,832 for the development of the Strategy in the financial year 2007/08. We expect this to be continued up to the end of 2011/12. The DCSF/Department for Transport also provide £21,000 of School Travel Plan Adviser Grant, which has been confirmed up to the end of 2010/11. Both grants are being used to fund a School Travel Officer post, which is essential for the delivery of this strategy. Other existing staff resources and revenue budgets will be called upon as necessary in order to deliver the Strategy's action plan, targets and objectives.
- 3.5.2 Other expenditure incurred in the delivery of the strategy includes RBWM's Home to School Transport budget, which is just over £2 million in 2008/09, of which approximately £1.3 million is spent transporting children with special needs to special schools and special units, £100k is for denominational transport, and £600k is spent on transport to secondary and FE colleges.
- 3.5.3 In seeking to deliver capital improvements identified within the Action Plan, we will seek to make effective use of our own funding streams and maximise the use of external funding,

such as: developer (S106) contributions; Sustrans Links to Schools; Lottery Funding; and European Funding. We will also explore opportunities for accessing any other relevant funding streams that become available.

4. OPTIONS AVAILABLE AND RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 Options

	Option	Comments	Financial Implications
1.	Endorse the Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy	If endorsed, the Strategy would be published on the council's website, thus discharging the statutory duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006. We will also launch a PR exercise to embed the Strategy throughout the Borough and its Schools and Colleges. This is the preferred recommendation.	Possible future funding opportunities and increased LTP settlement (government funding for transport).
2.	Endorse the Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy with amendments	Members may wish to amend parts of the strategy. However, if these amendments materially affected the strategy, then this may require further consultation and delay.	Possible loss of DCSF grant (circa £13k)
3.	Not endorse the Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy	This would leave the council without an up to date strategy, putting it in breach of its statutory duties under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.	Possible loss of DCSF grant (circa £13k)

4.2 Risk assessment

4.2.1 The risk of not endorsing the strategy is that the Council will not have an up-to-date strategy in place, thus putting it in breach of its statutory duties under the Education and Inspections Act. This could lead to government withdrawing future allocation of the DCSF Grant funding, which is currently being used to fund the School Travel Officer post.

4.2.2 Potentially this could result in the School Travel Officer post being curtailed. Currently, this post is a temporary appointment until the School Travel Adviser Grant runs out in March 2011. There is no budget in the establishment to support the post after this time. The budget provision of 1FTE for this post would be circa £40k including overheads, although the DCSF Grant would contribute £12,832 until the end of March 2012.

5. CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT

5.1.1 This Strategy has been developed using a partnership approach, involving officers from: Children's Services; Environment; and Planning and Development.

5.1.2 The draft document was sent out to key stakeholders, including schools, was promoted via the Schools Bulletin and was posted on the public consultations page of the Borough's website. The public consultation period for the strategy was from 21 July to 30 September 2008. Two responses to the formal consultation were received, which are summarised below together with the Council's response.

Respondent	Comment	Action
<p>Children's Trust Development Manager</p>	<p>p4 - correct title of CYPP is 'Children and Young People Plan 2008-2011'</p> <p>p5 - the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board is now the 'Children's Trust Executive Board'.</p> <p>p5 - The Strategic Health Authority needs to be removed from the list of members, and the LSCB is the Local Safeguarding Children (not Children's) Board</p> <p>p17 - in terms of young people's safety concerns, would it also be relevant to mention the results of the TellUs2 survey (in which 30% of respondents said they felt a bit/very unsafe on public transport, compared to a national average of 27%) and/or young people's concerns about lack of safety on the streets raised at the Speakeasy event?</p> <p>p18 - Bracknell Forest Council no longer uses Borough in title</p> <p>p22 - in the action plan section, would it be worth highlighting which of the targets are LAA targets?</p> <p>p26 - CYPP needs correct title (above)</p>	<p>Amended</p> <p>Amended</p> <p>Amended</p> <p>Not amended – buses and trains are already fitted with CCTV and there is no other evidence to suggest that young people are deterred from using public transport. Safety on the streets is covered under the Community Safety Strategy</p> <p>Amended</p> <p>Amended</p> <p>Amended</p>
<p>Headteacher St Edmund Campion Catholic Primary School</p>	<p>There was no cycle training this year</p> <p>Was concerned at suggestion that all educational trips should be by sustainable travel modes - sometimes it isn't viable to go by coach eg if we are going to Braywick it is so much cheaper for parents to take the children by car than to hire a coach to go 2 miles.</p>	<p>Not amended - a slightly reduced Cycle Training Programme was carried out in 2008. The Borough is bidding for funding to outsource training and upgrade to Bikeability in 2009.</p> <p>Not amended – the strategy only aims to increase the proportion of school trips made by sustainable modes</p>

	Trips to matches are not sustainable because of the CRB regime. Parents can only take their own children if they do not have CRB status - this means many more cars on the road.	Not amended – it is recognised that schools have to work within the existing legal framework.
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6. COMMENTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Planning and Environment - 26/01/09 - That the report be recommended to Cabinet for approval subject to an extra line being added about Independent Schools.

Children’s Services – 28/01/09 - The Panel endorsed the report. One Member expressed concern at the proposed Council funded appointment of a School Travel Officer.

7. IMPLICATIONS

The following implications have been addressed where indicated below.

Financial	Legal	Human Rights Act	Planning	Sustainable Development	Diversity & Equality
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Background Papers: Children and Young People Plan 2008-2011; Local Transport Plan 2006-2011; LTP Progress Report (November 2008)

Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (February 2009)

Executive Summary

Introduction

This document sets out the Royal Borough's approach to 'Sustainable Modes of Travel' for all travel to and from schools within the Borough. It is also in response to the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which places a duty on local authorities to develop sustainable travel and transport networks and to promote their use for home to school travel.

"Sustainable modes of travel" are defined as those that may improve either or both of the following:

- (a) The physical well-being of those who use them;
- (b) The environmental well-being of the whole or a part of their area.

Sustainable modes are considered to include:

- Walking;
- Cycling;
- Bus / coach;
- Rail; and
- Car sharing.

The strategy affects children and young people of sixth form age and below and covers not only those who live in the Borough, but also those travelling in from and out of neighbouring local authorities to receive education or training.

The strategy looks at the issues affecting access to and travel between:

- Mainstream primary and secondary schools;
- Denominational schools;
- Special needs education centres;
- Pupil referral units;
- Sixth form and further education colleges;
- Vocational training centres; and
- Independent schools.

Many of the measures identified in this strategy are available to independent schools as well as mainstream schools, but in many cases, take-up has been relatively modest. The Council will seek to actively promote these services to raise awareness and improve participation rates by the independent school sector.

The Strategy

The strategy is established to focus our resources under the following key themes:

- **School Travel Planning:** identifying tailored mechanisms for addressing travel issues and effecting changes in travel behaviour.

- **Infrastructure:** Providing, improving and maintaining routes used by pupils and students to travel (other than by car) to and from schools including improving access to school premises and providing adequate on-site facilities.
- **Road Safety / Independent Travel:** Providing children and young people with the necessary skills to be able to travel safely and independently.
- **Home to School / Post 16 Travel:** capitalise on opportunities to maximise the benefits of home to school transport provision and recognise where additional investment can improve accessibility to education opportunities that may not otherwise be taken up.
- **Extended Schools:** develop the changing demands for transport to and from school, and the challenges and opportunities being presented by travel associated with extended services at the start and end of the school day.
- **14-19 Provision:** provide advanced travel planning to ensure that the chosen centres of learning are accessible and that transport is not a barrier to take up of these courses.

Vision & Objectives

Our vision is:

“For children and young people to enjoy straightforward access to high quality education services and to have a genuine choice as to where and how they access these services”

The objectives of the Strategy are to:

- improve access to education services for all children and young people and ensure that education choices are not unduly constrained by a lack of transport availability;
- improve travel choice for journeys to local schools and colleges and raise awareness of available travel options;
- equip children and young people with the skills and knowledge to be able to travel safely and independently wherever possible;
- create a safe, secure and healthy environment for children and young people travelling to and from local educational establishments;
- increase the proportion of education-related trips undertaken by sustainable travel modes, and reduce the proportion undertaken by car.

Action Plan

Given the mix of geographical areas that exist within the Borough, and the unique travel issues facing each family and school, it is clear that a ‘one size fits all’ approach is not appropriate. This is a core principle of School Travel Planning and is reflected in our approach.

The Strategy will be integrated within the planning and implementation of all relevant capital investment programmes, including those for the Local Transport Plan and new school developments.

The Action Plan is an ongoing process and makes use of the Councils existing resources and budgets to develop the key themes of the Strategy identified above (see Table 1 for full plan).

Achievements towards the Key Themes:

School Travel Planning: A total of 40 School Travel Plans have been developed, with seven submitted to date in 2008/09, including one independent school.

Infrastructure: The Borough is working with 10 schools in 2008/09 to introduce Safer Routes to Schools measures such as speed limits, parking restrictions, pedestrian crossings, keep clear markings and pedestrian guardrail.

Road Safety / Independent Travel: The Borough and its partners provide a range of road safety programmes from general road safety awareness and cycle training to pre-driver programmes. The Borough is currently exploring options for upgrading its cycle training to the new national Bikeability standard.

Home to School / Post 16 Travel: The Royal Borough provides transport for some 1,500 children per day. Subsidised travel is provided for around 150 post-16 students. The Borough also provides a 'Yellow School Bus' service to serve the Windsor area, enabling pupils not entitled to free home-to-school transport to travel for a subsidised fare. The bus carries pupils travelling from Eton Wick and Dedworth to Windsor Boys' School, Windsor Girls' School and Trevelyan Middle School.

Extended Schools: A number of schools are looking at innovative ways of minimising the impact of travel to pre and after school activities that are off-site. For example, Boyne Hill Infant School has established a walking bus to bring pupils from nearby All Saints Primary School.

14-19 Provision: East Berkshire College has already developed a travel plan and the Borough is currently working with Berkshire College of Agriculture (BCA) to develop one for their site at Burchett's Green. BCA already operate a number of bus services to cater for students living in nearby towns.